Madoff: From posh penthouse to tiny jail cell

NEW YORK—BERNARD MADOFF WENT from a $7-million penthouse to a tiny jail cell with cinderblock walls and linoleum floors after confessing he carried out what may be the biggest fraud in Wall Street history to escape the pain of the 1930s recession.

The change in lifestyle for the 70-year-old financier was welcomed Thursday by angry investors who packed into a federal courtroom to watch Madoff plead guilty to cheating nearly 5,000 investors out of billions of dollars.

"I am painfully aware that I have

MADOFF A6

SUPER LIFESTYLE / C1

Francis Magalona leaves 'permanent mark:' A Super tribute

SUPER LIFESTYLE / D1

Unforgettable: 10 greatest moments of Eraserheads' final set

SATURDAY SPECIAL / G4

Desperate searcher finds EWTN back in SkyCable 61

SPORTS / A26

Mickelson shows way at Doral Open; Tiger 6 shots off

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, March 14, 2009 ★★ Vol. 24 / No. 96 online: www.inquirer.net

No more 'pulis patolas' on TV dramas, films

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE PULIS PATOLA will soon be history—at least in TV soaps and in the movies.

An agreement is in the works between

NO MORE A9

DE LOS ANGELES His "ex" buries him in diaper d**k & b**

FAMILY FEUD

Ex-wife hits 'womanizing,' son sorry for pa; both deny any role in Legacy

By Christine O. Avendaño

HE ROSE ALONE, WITHOUT US. HE goes down also, without us.

So declared the ex-wife of Legacy founder Cielo de los Angeles yesterday as she denied any involvement in his businesses that are now the subject of investigation for being allegedly steeped in fraud.

Facing multiple cases—like her husband—following the collapse of the Legacy Group, Ms. Concepcion Padilla-De los Angeles and son Martin Nicolo came out to speak to the media to clear their names.

Ms. De los Angeles' lawyer, Howard Calleja, said his client broke her silence after her son was mentioned at the Senate hearing into the troubled personal industry, including the Legacy Consolidated Plans Inc.

Now, 25, was mentioned as an incorporator of Legacy and allegedly the one who sold a P5-million house and lot in Parañaque City that was supposedly acquired by Securities and Exchange Commission Commissioner Jesus Martinez, who in turn purportedly gifted it to his son.

Mother and son are facing a total of nine cases, seven of these against Nico alone. The cases involve syndicated estafa and violation of the Securities Regulation Code.

EXWIFE A8

CONNIE P. DE LOS ANGELES What is his is his, mine is mine.

Lopezes sell Meralco

₱1.3-B poll automated machines lying idle

By Kristine L. Alave

HOPES ARE HIGH FOR THE automation of the 2010 elections, but unknown to the general public, there are 1,985 vote-counting machines gathering mold in a Manila warehouse since January 2004.

Five years after the Supreme Court voided the Commission on Elections' ₱1.2-billion contract with Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. to automate the 2004 polls, the Comelec is moving to force the company to take ownership of the mothballed counting machines by abandoning them in the Muntinlupa warehouse.

The decision is expected to bolster the Comelec's suit against the company, which claims that the contract was aboveboard and that the poll body was obligated to pay in full for the machines.

The Makati Regional Trial Court is the scene of the legal battle between the Comelec (which wants the company to return the ₱1.03 billion it had paid for the machines) and Mega Pacific (which is demanding

P1.3-B POLL A8

COLONIAL WASTE REVISITED While the legal battle continues between the Comelec and Mega Pacific eSolutions, 1,995 automated counting machines have been in storage the past five years at the Mexi-Lite warehouse where rental costs the Comelec ₱30 million per year. It plans to transfer soon its election gear and other archived materials to the post office where storage is cheaper. But the Comelec is adamant on leaving behind the machines for Mega Pacific to take back or pay for their upkeep.

MVP's PLDT, Danding's SMC to fight for control

By Doris C. Dumlao and Elizabeth Sanchez-Lanzon

THE LOPEZ FAMILY has agreed to sell most of its stake in the Manila Electric Co. to a unit of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. in what is believed to be an attempt to block a hostile takeover bid of the country's largest distribution utility by the giant San Miguel Corp.

The Lopez group's First Philippine Holdings Corp., yesterday announced it had forged an "alliance" with PLDT by selling 20 percent of Meralco for about P20 billion to Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel), PLDT's second wireless phone unit.

This means that the Lopez family whose majority stake in Meralco once formed the nucleus of the group's power empire will retain only 13.4 percent once the transaction is completed within the third quarter of 2009.

LOPEZES A1

Islamic conference: We can't wait forever

SAYING IT CANNOT WAIT FOREVER, the powerful Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has called for the full implementation of the 1996 peace pact between the Philippines and Moro rebels, and declared it "cannot continue to participate" in a process that would give Muslims false hopes.

OIC Secretary-General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu acted the call at a closed-door, tripartite meeting among representatives of the Arroyo administration, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the OIC, which ended yesterday.

The meeting, held at the Heritage Hotel, was aimed at resolving differences in the implementation of the 13-year-old accord.

In his message read by OIC special envoy Sayyed El-Mutry, Ihsanoglu said it was about time a genuine peace was achieved in the southern Philippines, 33 years after the signing of the Tripoli Accord calling for the grant of autonomy to Filipino Muslims.

"That is a very long time by any standards, and a very long wait for the Bangsamoro people," Ih-

ORGANIZATION A6

DACER MURDER

DOJ claims 2 more witnesses to killing

By Norman Bordadora

TWO CIVILIANS HAVE COME forward claiming knowledge of the double murder of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in 2000, according to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

In a news forum yesterday, Gonzalez quoted the two civilians as saying that they had collected the wood used to burn the bodies. Authorities later recovered the charred remains in a remote village in Indang, Cavite.

Gonzalez backed the credibility of the persons offering new information on the twin killings in anticipation of former Senior Supt. Cesar Mancao's extradition from the United States and the disclosure of the contents of his affidavit purportedly implicating prominent persons.

"They are the ones who gathered the firewood for the burn-

DOJ BARES A6

Court: Jamby has right to aunt's billions

By Julie M. Aurelio and Michael Lim Ubac

IT'S FINAL. SEN. JAMBY Madrigal is a legal heir of her billionaire aunt and will have the right to participate in the disposition of the estate of the late Consuelo Madrigal-Collantes.

Resolving a dispute between Madrigal and her relatives, Makati Judge Oscar Pimentel reaffirmed his July ruling that Madrigal has the legal personality to participate in the administration of her late aunt's will and fortune.

The court also ruled that its July 2, 2008 order was final and

COURT A9

A MEMORIAL Sen. Jamby Madrigal says her court victory honors the memory of her philanthropic aunt, Chito Madrigal-Collantes. The senator is with her lawyer, Ernesto Francisco Jr.

DOJ finds trader liable for ₱10-M bribe offer

By Norman Bordadora

A DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) panel has recommended that businessman Francis de Borja be charged with attempted to corrupt a public official, according to DOJ Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Court of Appeals Justice Jose Sabio Jr. had accused De Borja of offering him P10 million to

DOJ FINDS A6

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY Some showers and thunderstorms mostly sunny with scattered rains. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to stormy cloudy skies.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Laoag	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Basco	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cubo	Mostly Cloudy
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Pagadian	Partly Cloudy	Cotabato	Mostly Cloudy
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Dumaguete	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Mostly Cloudy

E-mail: pi_secondfrontpage@inq.net.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/sfrontpage

EZ2 (pick two numbers) 8 1 — SUERTRES (pick 3 digits) 2 0 8

4D (4 digits, any order) 7 1 8

FOUR DIGIT (pick 4 digits) 9 3 9 2 — 3D (pick 3 digits) 7 8 1

MEGALOTTO 6/45 (pick 6 numbers) 11 16 18 21 22 37

P5,939,553.60

GMA signs ₱1.4 trillion budget

By TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS SIGNED into law the P1.414-trillion national budget for 2009 which would give the government higher spending power to mitigate the effects of the deepening global recession on the country.

Republic Act No. 9524, which is P108 billion higher than last year's budget, allots more resources to programs that would pump prime the economy toward more jobs, build infrastructure and increase social services, officials said.

The new budget will take effect on April. Until then, the government will continue to operate on the 2008 remained budget.

"The government must pour all its resources and resolve into programs that help the poor and the middle class. This includes more and more investments in education, healthcare and infrastructure," Ms Arroyo told the Asia-Pacific Convention of the Rotarian International in Cebu City.

Biggest recipients

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said this year's higher budget would lead to a deficit of P177.2 billion, but was still within the range of 1 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Andaya said that Ms Arroyo did not veto the P9.8 billion economic stimulus fund (ESF), contrary to earlier reports.

"The ESF is a major component of the stimulus package and if method with other infrastructure projects will be a major jobs generator," he said.

Mr Arroyo also did not veto the P66-billion cut in the P362-billion debt service payment, Andaya said.

"What was vetoed was the concept of debt service as programmed," he said, referring to the lawmakers' attempt to make debt service payment as new appropriation, instead of working to the old policy of automatic appropriations.

With the P362-billion cut retained, the government would pay some P252 billion in more for interest, he said.

One of the biggest recipients was the Department of Public Works and Highways, whose P330 billion budget ranks second to the Department of Education's P368.2 billion.

Diliskah said the big budget for DPWH included the government's major thrust to spend more on building roads, bridges, and expressways to stimulate the economy.

In the pipeline is the construction of at least 6,000 classrooms; 2,939 kilometers of farm-to-market roads, irrigation facilities, among other "shovel-ready projects," according to Andaya.

Teodoro: I won't resign yet

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro yesterday denied calls for him to quit his post after declaring that he would run for presidency in the 2010 elections, saying he has yet to be tasked his place in with the presidency.

"I know my obligations and I know deliverables," he told reporters here after gracing the turnover ceremonies of the graduating Philippine Military Academy Masigabo class here.

He said he would "continue to work" as defense secretary.

But if President Macapagal-Arroyo would ask him to resign "because is not because of politics," Teodoro said, "Salin ako (I would leave)."

Teodoro, 61, said his plate now still includes the endorsement of his candidacy by any party which may consider him as its standard-bearer for 2010.

'Not the right time'

Teodoro is a member of the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) headed by his uncle, businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

But he said he had not talked to his uncle about his political plans nor has he asked for the businessman's support.

The defense chief declined to answer further questions about his political ambitions. "This is not the right time," he said.

He said the military would not be worry about his ambitions. He said he had not been selected to run "and that may not even happen at all."

TEODORO

Undersecretary Cornel Agustin, deputy presidential spokesperson, squelched speculations that Teodoro was committing "conflict of interest" by staying on to the Cabinet after his announcement.

She pointed out that Teodoro had not yet filed his certificate of candidacy, and only then, can he go on leave.

"Let's watch out if something changes in his performance. He's doing a good job in his position as defense chief," she told reporters in a briefing.

Administration parties Lakas and the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) said Teodoro's bid was "a welcome addition" to their lists of presidential aspirants, among them Vice President Noli de Castro, Senate Richard Gordon and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando.

Teodoro said he would have to abide with the selection process and the choice of standard-bearer made by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I am serving in the Cabinet of the President. I am a part of the administration coalition headed by the President. Politically, it's the President's word and we will respect the decision," he said.

Existing candidate

Mr Arroyo's political adviser admitted that Teodoro was an "exciting" presidential candidate but he has to obtain enough support the President's endorsement.

Secretary Gabriel Claudio said nobody could question Teodoro's "outstanding qualities" and credentials as a "practical statesman."

"He has the youthful idealism, leadership, charm, and intelligence to make an exciting candidate for the highest national office," he said.

But in the end, Teodoro has to rank high in poll surveys to secure the endorsement of Ms Arroyo, head of the ruling Lakas-CMD and Kampi, Claudio said.

According to Claudio, Lakas' deputy secretary general, there are procedures to securing Mr Arroyo's endorsement and becoming the administration's standard-bearer in 2010: qualities and winnability.

"We have to see how quickly he captures the public's attention and imagination, how quickly it catches fire and how well it sticks once it's introduced," he said in a phone interview. With reports from Alcuin Papa and TJ Burgonio in Manila

Red Cross hostages call, sound 'calm, composed'

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE THREE Red Cross employees of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have remained calm despite their confirmed captivity in Abu Sayyaf custody, officials said, according to an official of the aid group.

Annemarie Inyak, incoming ICRC communications coordinator set to replace Roland Rigler, told the Inquirer by phone that Swiss Andreas Notter, Italian Eugenio Vagni and Filipina Jean Lacaba, made contact with the ICRC office in Manila on Wednesday.

Notter, Vagni and Lacaba were being held by the group of Albader Parad after they were snatched just outside the Sulu provincial capital in Jolo at town on Jan. 15.

"Yes, we heard from them on Wednesday. Although it's an enormously tremendous situation for them, they did sound calm and composed," Inyak said.

But Inyak said in several other details of their talk with the three kidnapped victims.

Inyak said the ICRC community was eagerly watching the situation and hoping their three colleagues would be freed soon. A counter to Beating the days the three had spent in captivity is was posted on the ICRC website.

"We are all waiting...the ICRC staff in Manila, in Geneva and worldwide—for our colleagues to be back with us again. Of course we hope this day will come very soon," Inyak said.

She said the ICRC community also admired the three captives for their "resilience in dealing with this difficult situation."

"We believe their health is stable even though they are suffering from fatigue and stress," Inyak said.

Asked about the reported ransom the Abu Sayyaf had demanded in exchange for the victims' freedom, Inyak declined to answer.

The alleged P50-million ransom was based by Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema, who heads a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Jolo Mayor Hussin Amin admitted receiving similar reports but dismissed them as rumors as he "was not the one who personally received it."

Amin said if the P50-million ransom demand were true, it could be only for ransoms and sodas.

He also said he received information that the Abu Sayyaf wanted P500 million for all three hostages.

Abu Sayyaf's Parad had denied that his group was asking money. *Jobo Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

CHR presses GMA on HR bills

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (CHR) yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to certify as urgent the passage of legislative measures seeking to protect human rights.

The Commission has posed the urgency of "human rights measures as the Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, in various instances to include the CHR Assessment on the Universal Periodic Review of the (Philippines in its membership to the Human Rights Council," CHR chair Leila de Lima said in a statement.

"The Commission on Human Rights proposes the challenge anew, and calls on the Presidency to unite her influence and certify the urgent passage of these important legislative measures on human rights," De Lima added.

De Lima was referring to bills that seek to criminalize human rights violations such as torture and abduction.

The House of Representatives has already passed the measures on third reading but the Senate versions are still pending.

The CHR called on the Senate to "demonstrate the same level of commitment as their counterparts in the House of Representatives for the immediate passage of these landmark measures and compel the Executive to perform its mandate by signing these measures into law."

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Step down and save face, Chiz tells Merci

By Michael Lim Ubac

GUTIERREZ

THE OFFICE OF OMBUDSMAN MERCEDITAS N. Gutierrez will only again be "lost in glory" if she steps down in October as mandated by the Constitution, Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero said yesterday.

"Step down in October this year to redeem yourself and the lost glory and integrity of your office," said Escudero in a statement.

The senator warned about the rapid decline of the people's trust in the Office of the Ombudsman, which is mainly by the constitution with powers to prosecute corrupt government officials and their private cohorts.

"I do not intend to engage the Ombudsman in a long and rigorous legal debate. Time is of the essence. The Ombudsman's office, whose credibility has already been tarnished with long-lasting, downtown and fossil, must be given the chance to redeem itself," the senator said.

"And this is our visible option for her and Mahalaganag diner Gutierrez does not want to resign," Escudero added.

On Wednesday, Escudero, a member of the Judicial and Bar Council, found a novel argument to pressure Gutierrez to resign in case impeachment proceedings against her fail in the administration-controlled House of Representatives.

The civil society wants Gutierrez impeached for allegedly refusing to prosecute officials close to the Palo family.

Escudero cited a 1955 Supreme Court ruling in the Republic v. Imperial, which supported his arguments that Gutierrez was not entitled to a full term of seven years as Ombudsman.

The senator contended that Gutierrez was only serving out the unexpired term of her predecessor, Simeon Marcelo, and according to his calculations, her term should end in October.

Marcelo was appointed Ombudsman in December 2003. He resigned in November 2005, prompting President Macapagal-Arroyo to appoint Gutierrez as his replacement.

However, Assistant Ombudsman Jose de Jesus stressed that Gutierrez "is not just merely filling in for Marcelo."

De Jesus cited Republic Act No. 6770, the law that created the Office of the Ombudsman in 1989, which says that "in case the incumbent Ombudsman resigns, the Overall Deputy Ombudsman shall serve as acting Ombudsman until a new Ombudsman shall have been appointed or for a term."

De Jesus recalled that when Marcelo resigned in 2005, then Overall Deputy Ombudsman Margarita Gervasio Jacinto was appointed as the new Ombudsman in December 2005.

He said Gutierrez' term will only expire in December 2011.

But Escudero countered yesterday that President Arroyo did not create a new seven-year term to appointing Gutierrez in 2005, after serving an chief presidential legal counsel.

"The administrative rule used in Republic v. Imperial, which was issued in 1921 has been consistently applied in recent cases, in 2000 and 2008, concerning officials in government," said Escudero.

He said that in 2008, the Supreme Court dismissed the term of then Civil Service Commissioner Thelma Cristobal by one year, having succeeded her predecessor's unexpired term.

In 2006, the high court likewise ruled in the same manner that then Philippine Ecolan Authority General Manager Nissa Yan should only serve the unexpired portion of his predecessor's term, Escudero added.

"Our case law shows that, as a matter of rule in administrative law, the resignation or the removal of an officer during his/her term and the appointment of a successor do not divide the term or create a new and distinct one," he emphasized.

NIA chief fires back: There's nothing to probe

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE NATIONAL IRRIGATION Administration (NIA) yesterday said there was nothing for Congress to investigate in the P1.4-billion irrigation machinery project because it has not been awarded to any contractor.

NIA administrator Carlos Salazar made the statement in reaction to a call by Cavite Rep. Ophlie Barzaga and Assemblyman Rep. Rafael Mariano to investigate the supply and delivery contracts for concrete and tracks for the rehabilitation of irrigation and drainage canals all over the country.

"There is no irregularity to speak of in the first place because this project has yet to be awarded to any of the qualified bidders," said Salazar in a statement.

Salazar disputed the claim of Shalimar Machineries, which wants Mandaluyong Regional Trial Court Judge Amelita Tolentino to issue a temporary restraining order to stop the bidding, that it was unduly disqualified from the bidding even though its bid was 20 percent lower than the other prequalified bids.

Salazar said Shalimar and another bidder were disqualified not because the NIA was favoring other bidders but because they failed to meet the eligibility requirement such as valid Securities and Exchange Commission registration and track record in the business of at least 25 years and be the holder of an exclusive distributorship for 10 years.

Only Civic Merchandising Inc. and Transport Equipment Corp. were prequalified among the original seven bidders. Other firms had backed out even before the bidding.

He pointed out that the NIA bid and awards committee has not yet completed the evaluation stage for its procurement process which has not been with the post-qualification stage.

There was no overpricing, Salazar said, because the bids submitted by the qualified participants were below the budget set by the NIA.

"The disqualified bidders could claim anything and even say their real bids were supposedly lower than the qualified bids, and nobody would know the real truth because their bids were never opened by the BAC," said Salazar.

NIA warned a reputable supplier with an extensive track record because hydraulic excavators have 23-to 30-year life span, which means that the winning bidder should still be around after those 10-year bids based experience in the purchase of dump trucks from Romania in 1979 and from China in 1980 that all turned out to be lemons.

"The continued delay in the implementation of the project would adversely affect NIA's commitment to jumpstart the farmer's administration's food security and food sufficiency agenda this year and to create more jobs in the countryside," said Salazar.

Hunt on for killer croc

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY Lito Atienza has asked experts in the Palawan Crocodile Farm to track down and capture the croc which attacked and killed an 11-year-old girl in Aguasan did last the other day.

In a statement released yesterday, Atienza said he directed the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) of the Aguasan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary (AMWS) to seal off the area where the incident occurred to make sure residents in the area would be safe.

"We have ordered our regional director in Mimaropa to assist in tracking down the dangerous crocodile," he said.

The environment chief also instructed officials to conduct an "extensive information campaign" in the community to make sure the death of the girl would not be repeated.

"I am enjoining local officials to provide the necessary support to the PAMB in conducting the information drive among the locals as well as fumigating the area to prevent additional victims," Atienza said.

According to reports, the girl was attacked by a crocodile estimated to be 7 meters long in Lake Mihabo in Buenavista town last March 7.

Citing a report from Aguasan Marsh assistant park superintendent Rolhus Ellazar, Atienza said the victim, identified as Jhonena Romano, was riding a banca with cousin, Jennifer Dagsa, when they were attacked by the crocodile. The two were on their way to a floating school in Lake Bunsuy. Alexis Pope

The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists Philippine Chapter

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Endocrine Family Feud

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Blood Pressure Check-up

Thyroid Physical Check-up

Body Mass Index (BMI) Determination

Bone Densitometry

Blood Sugar and HBA1c Determination*

Diabetic Foot Screening

Body Fat Analysis

Cholesterol Profile Determination*

*Fee applies

Otsuka pharmalink

Parliament of world religions set in Melbourne

HUNDREDS OF PILGRIMS ARE EXPECTED to fly to Australia in December to participate in The Parliament of the World's Religions, the largest and most diverse multidisciplinary gathering of religious and spiritual leaders in the world this year.

Gary Bekavac, chair of the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions, said thousands of guests from 69 countries will attend, making this the largest convention in Australia this year. Melbourne's newly launched Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Center, the centerpiece of the new $1.4 billion precinct along the Yarra, will host the event from 3-9 December 2009.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF FOOD AND DRUGS
Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City
Alabang, Muntinlupa City
Website: www.fda.gov.ph

12 March 2009

DOH-BFAD ADVISORY
No. 2009- 002

Nestlé Carnation Recall of Yummy Sweet and Creamy Peanut Spread (16 grams and 400 grams) covered by Batch Nos. 3040802 and 71240810 and Expiry Dates/Best Before Dates 05405 and 22405, respectively manufactured by Samuya Food Manufacturing, Inc.

In the interest of protecting public health and welfare, identified below are the two (2) batches of Yummy Sweet and Creamy Peanut Spread manufactured by Samuya Food Manufacturing, Inc., which were found by the Bureau of Food and Drugs, through laboratory examination, to be contaminated with Salmonella.

Brand	Pack Size	Batch No.	Expiry/Best Before Date
Yummy Sweet and Creamy Peanut Spread	400 grams	71240810	05405
Yummy Sweet and Creamy Peanut Spread	16 grams	3040802	05405

With the above findings, this Office hereby warmly recommends the following as immediate preventive measures and urgent those concerned of their strict compliance thereto:

For consumers

- Do not eat the peanut spread products covered by the batch number identified above and throw them away in a manner that prevents others from eating such products.
- Persons who think they may have become ill from eating the peanut spread covered by the batches identified above are advised to consult their health care providers.

For distributors and retailers

- Stop distributing and selling the peanut spread products covered by the batches identified above.

For institutions and food service establishments

- Ensure that the batches of the peanut spread product identified above are not served or used.

For the manufacturer:

- Stop further distribution and recall immediately the peanut spread products covered by the batches identified above.
- Inform consumers where in return any of the unconsumed peanut spread product covered by the above batches which are in their possession and refund of the purchase price.

To date, the Bureau of Food and Drugs has not received any adverse events associated with the consumption of this peanut spread products identified above. Further, the Bureau has directed the manufacturer to undertake immediate recall of the affected products identified above, is undertaking close monitoring on the establishment's actions, comprehensive audit and inspection on the manufacturing practices of the establishment and pursuing appropriate actions to protect public health and welfare.

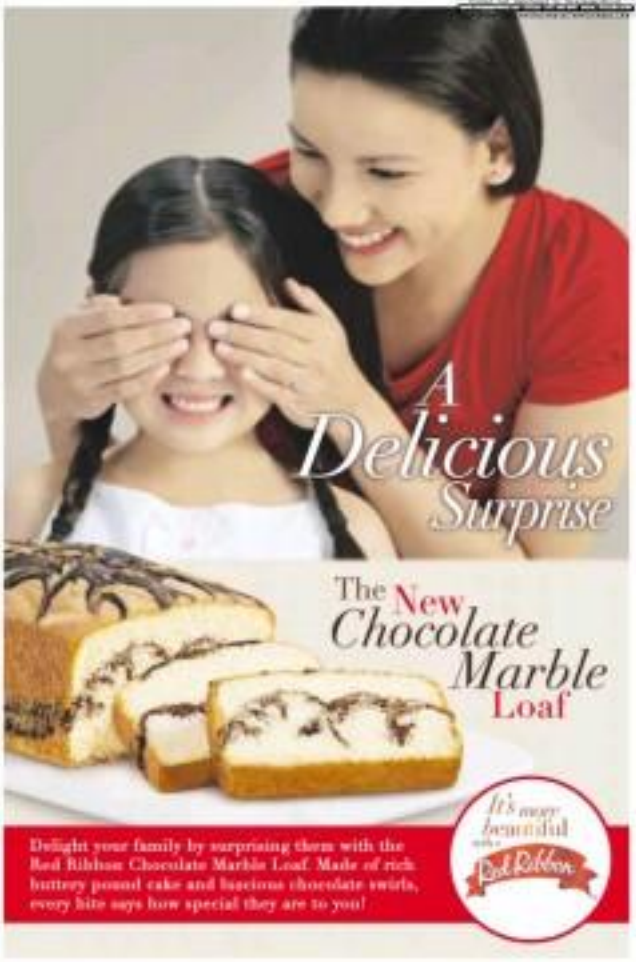
PROF. LETICIA GARDEÑA D. GUTIERREZ, M.D.
Director

BFAD - Rev. 01 (2008)

Corrections

IN THE MARCH 13 ISSUE, an infographic accompanying a front-page photo of Sen. Francis Escudero assessed the pre-campaign votes he received according to a Pulse Asia survey. The survey showed that he got 17—not 16—percentage votes.

IN THE SAME ISSUE, on In the Know on Page A20—"In Iseult Golden Tree's 122nd"—misstated that the 19-century classic Le Fleo Gallienne is the second largest book in the country. It is the largest book in the Philippines in terms of sheets as of end of 2008.



CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

MARCH 17, 2009

8:00-5:00 PM	ELA CHALLENGE (Academic Quiz Bee: Elementary, Secondary & College Level)	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium
7:00 PM	MAGICIAN SINGING CONTEST	
7:00 PM	2009 MR. & MS. HUNDRED ISLANDS (MUSIC, MAGICIAN, FASHION PORTION)	San Jose Drive - Bon Stage
7:00 PM	LITTLE MR. & MS. HUNDRED ISLANDS 2009 (TALENT PORTION)	San Jose Drive - MD Stage

MARCH 18, 2009

8:00 AM	OPENING OF THE BINIBINIAN FESTIVE 2009 PROJECTS & PROGRAM BOOTHS INSPECTION - March 18-22, 2009	Plaza Enrique Braganza Children's Park
9:00 AM	NUMBERED ISLANDS	Hundred Islands National Park
	BAND CLINIC TRAINEES	Brgy. Lucap
10:00 AM	OPENING OF THE PHOTO & ART GALLERY	Golden West College
1:00 PM	OPENING OF INTEL MINI FAIR	Golden West College
2:00-10:00 PM	March 18-22, 2009 BASKETBALL GAMES	Plaza Rotunda Oriseo
6:00 PM	TRAINORS' AND VENDORS' NIGHT	San Jose Drive - Bon Stage
6:00-7:00 PM	CHILDREN'S MASS (LITURGICAL)	St. Joseph Cathedral Parking Area
8:00 PM	"ISLANDTRIBUTE" BALIBARAYAN NIGHT	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium

MARCH 19, 2009

5:00 AM	RUNNING	Central Business District
6:30 AM	RUNNING (FUN RUN)	St. Joseph Cathedral
7:30 AM	GALLO WINE AND LIQUOR GRAND PARADE	Central Business District
12:00 PM	GALI-LAI BINIBINIAN NI GALI GALI	L. P. Garcia St.
1:00-1:30 PM	BALLROOM DANCE DEMONSTRATION	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium
2:00-10:00 PM	BANDE GARCIA	Plaza Rotunda Oriseo
	1 ON 1 DAY BASKETBALL	
5:00 PM	LITTLE MR. AND MISS ALAMINOS 2009	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium
7:00 PM	IDOLS RACE	San Jose Drive - Center Stage
	MR. AND UNIVERSE CLUBBING CONCEPT	
8:00 PM	"LYMANN" BARANGAY NIGHT	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium
	BANDE CITIZENS' AND DEFENDERS' NIGHT	San Jose Drive - Bon Stage
	PEOPLE'S PARTY	San Jose Drive - Center Stage
	PEOPLE'S PARTY	San Jose Drive - MD Stage

MARCH 20, 2009

8:00-6:00 PM	TECHNO CARAVAN	Plaza Enrique Braganza Children's Park
	LECTURE SERIES & COMPETITION: MANAGEMENT DAY	
	ENVIRONMENT LECTURE ON WASTE MANAGEMENT	
8:00-12:00 PM	MARIVARAN MARIDECOR MARIVARI	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium
9:00-12:00 PM	BASKETBALL GAMES	Plaza Rotunda Oriseo
	1 ON 1 DAY BASKETBALL	
6:00 PM	"SAGING PANAGUI"	Plaza Enrique Braganza
	CELEBRATE WITH THE ANALBARAN	
7:30 PM	2009 MR. & MS. HUNDRED ISLANDS FINALS	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium
8:00 PM	DISCO NIGHT	San Jose Drive - Bon Stage
8:00 PM	PEOPLE'S NIGHT	San Jose Drive - MD Stage

MARCH 21, 2009

8:00 AM	"LUMBIN KINAGUHAN" PHOTO ART	Plaza Rotunda Oriseo
9:00-5:00 PM	CARTO EXHIBITION	City Library
2:00-6:00 PM	INTEL MP HIP DANCE COMPETITION	Plaza Rotunda Oriseo
7:00 PM	INTEL BATTLE OF THE ARTISTS	San Jose Drive - MD Stage
	MUSIC NIGHT	San Jose Drive - Center Stage
8:00 PM	"SALO" DRAMA NIGHT	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium
	PEOPLE'S PARTY	San Jose Drive - Bon Stage

MARCH 22, 2009

6:00 AM	"BIKINI MUSEUM" FUN RUN	Poblacional Road
6:00 AM	GO KHONG BOULEVARD	Brgy. Lucap, Alaminos City
9:00-9:00 PM	BASKETBALL GAMES	Plaza Rotunda Oriseo
	1 ON 1 DAY BASKETBALL	
1:00 PM	BOXERMAN Relentless Boxing Competition	Plaza Rotunda Oriseo
2:00 PM	"LIVING THE LEGACY IN ANALBARAN"	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium
	FOLK DANCE COMPETITION (Opens)	
6:00 PM	"CAMILO" CULTURAL FASHION SHOW	Don Leopoldo Diaz Auditorium
	MEDIA NIGHT	San Jose Drive - Center Stage
	PEOPLE'S NIGHT	San Jose Drive - Bon Stage
	PEOPLE'S NIGHT	San Jose Drive - MD Stage
11:00 PM	FIREWORKS DISPLAY	San Jose Drive Grounds

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Lopezes sell Meralco; PLDT, SMC gird for battle

From page A1

The deal is expected to set the stage for a fierce battle for control of Manila's business district between the telecommunications giant led by Manuel V. Pangilinan and the food and beverage conglomerate led by Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

San Miguel, which is diversifying into infrastructure and heavy industry, has built up a large holding in Meralco since initially buying a 27 percent stake in October, acquiring key boardroom and management representation. It has also since doubled it some stake to acquire control of at least 86 percent of Meralco.

PLDT, the country's dominant phone firm, may be fortifying its build out Meralco ahead of San Miguel's planned entry into wireless broadband and mobile phone services via a partnership with Qatar Telecom.

"The acquisition of a stake in Meralco constitutes a strategic investment for the PLDT group that could lead to significant opportunities for operational and business synergies and credit in new revenue streams and cost savings for both organizations," PLDT said.

COJUANGCO In takeover mode

PANGILINAN Outside of Lopezes

Smart, Pitoil merger

With the Pitoil purchase, the telecommunications giant's stake in Meralco comes to 30.1 percent. The PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund, the benefit pension plan for PLDT employees, each or swapped up a 10.1 percent stake for Pitoil shares from the open market as well as from Meralco's retirement fund.

Pitoil will acquire 233 million shares in Meralco at P98 per share, the same price that San Miguel paid for the ORIX shares over a three-year installment.

The PLDT group also announced yesterday it would expenditure the cellular phone operations of Pitoil with Smart Communications, the country's largest wireless phone provider. Smart will undertake a tender offer for minority shareholders of Pitoil. The latter will become the holding company of the PLDT stake in Meralco.

Meralco has been run by the Lopez group for decades but it appears to be selling a strategic stake to PLDT to block San Miguel from gaining control, analysts said.

PLDT is "clearly allying with the Lopezes," said Jose Nimo, an analyst at 68 Capital Investors.

PHC, the holding company of the Lopez family's power generation interests, said it would vote with PLDT in the May 26 stockholders' meeting.

It said it has agreed with PLDT on the "corporate governance principles," such as the nomination of Meralco board directors that would enable PLDT "to actively support in the management of Meralco".

"The bottom line here is that it's down to just two parties. It will be a bruising match between the PLDT group and San Miguel Corp. It's control of Meralco," said Jose Ellint Lanton, head of research at Campos, Lanuza & Co.

Part of entire puzzle

"The value may not be Meralco so but it's probably part of the entire puzzle. Meralco becomes the leverage. The successor is still not clear as he or Jose Miguel and PLDT are connected," he said.

Sabadin Securities analyst Bernard Arimazon said the successful Meralco deal depends on who has the edge after the Meralco shareholders' meeting in May.

Other analysts said the entry of PLDT would save under it more difficult for San Miguel to forge synergies between Meralco and Liberty Telecom, another telephone and power company which the conglomerate plans to take over.

San Miguel president Ramon Ang earlier said the broadband-over-power-lines strategy—providing Internet services using electricity lines—would switch Meralco customers in the country to a lower cost.

"San Miguel will be stuck with Liberty without getting any synergy with Meralco. Maybe they'll just sell it to Pangilinan too," said another broker.

Synergies

The PLDT group says cost synergy arises between Meralco and PLDT. According to a PLDT presentation and PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund circular, the synergies will be in the form of cost savings or in eight specific areas. These line broadband, fiber optic backbone network, electric power poles, easements and rights of way, prepaid electricity service, business offices, ICT or data center, bill statement printing and processing and sales force functions.

PLDT also sees that the power line broadband" being eyed by San Miguel. This could be a means of providing extra broadband services in areas not currently reached by PLDT facilities or in areas where such facilities are already saturated, providing an additional capital expenditure savings for PLDT, Equitrust said.

Its said Meralco also has a subsidiary which operates a digital fiber optic network and provides data services to listed parties, including current customers of PLDT.

Meralco also has a large residential subscriber base which the PLDT Group can tap to cross-marketing and cross-selling initiatives, Equitrust said.

DOJ finds businessman liable for ₱10-M bribe offer

OU BONG Ho defenses are mere denials, according to the DOJ panel that investigated the businessman.

Front page A1

exchange for giving way to Justice Boris Ardales to the chairmanship of the appellate court's division that would handle the Meralco-GMA law case.

An investigation by the Supreme Court resulted in the dismissal of one appellate court justice and in sanctions against four other magistrates. The high tribunal then ordered the DOJ to investigate Subio.

Guilty of attempted corruption

"The panel that investigated the Subio-De Borja issue came up with a resolution that De Borja is guilty of attempting to corrupt a public official," Gonzalez said yesterday at the monthly news forum at the Ambassador Hotel in Manila.

"We will now charge De Borja with attempted corruption," he said, adding that the crime is punishable by six years and one day of imprisonment.

The DOJ panel of investigators panel is recommending that Subio be charged with conspiring to corrupt a public official as defined by the Revised Penal Code.

The panel further recommended that De Borja be charged with the violation of Presidential Decree No. 46 that penalizes the giving of gifts to public officials.

The resolution was signed by panel chair Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Paredes and members, assistant secretary Arturo de Castro and city prosecutor Emilio Dy Dit Lee Santos.

"So to [the] defenses cursed by respondent, which are merely denials, suffice to say that the corpus of [the] prosecution's evidence is designed to establish that there is sufficient ground to engender a well-founded belief that a crime has been committed and the respondent is probably guilty thereof," the DOJ panel said.

The accuser

Subio alleged that De Borja offered him P10 million supposedly in behalf of the controlling Lopez clan of Meralco to Subio would make way for Reyes' chairmanship of the division that handled the Lopez's dispute with GMA over control of the power distributor.

The ensuing scandal, as a result of Subio's revelations, resulted in the dismissal of appellate court Justice Vicente Roxas and sanctions for four other magistrates including Subio.

Organization of Islamic Conference to RP: We can't wait forever

From page A1

outright said, "So, we cannot allow this process to go on forever."

"We want to continue to participate in a process that will give the people [what hopes]. We have put a time frame for this process and a benchmark to measure its success or failure," the OIC head added.

A copy of his speech was released to the hacienda by the public office of Philippine president Benigno Simeon Aquino.

Nur Misuari, founding chairman of the MNLF told the delegates the cycle of war to the Philippines' southern islands must be stopped soon.

Legal panel formed

A joint communique released after the meeting said the Arroyo administration and the MNLF had agreed to form a legal panel to prepare temporary annex to the law creating the autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao (Aarmm).

Despite the signing of the 1996 peace agreement between the government of President Fidel Ramos and the MNLF, the Moro people have continued to live in poverty.

The MNLF says the accord has not been fully implemented so as to allow them to enjoy substantial autonomy and have a say on the use of the rich mineral and natural resources of Mindanao and outlying islands.

Bridge of harmony

In the joint communique, the government and the MNLF reaffirmed their commitment to "preserve the primacy" of the 1996 agreement.

Ramos, in his closing remarks, said there was need to "strive harder to fortify the bridges of peace and harmony and bring down the barrier of distrust and misunderstanding that have brought untold suffering and misery to many of our brothers in Mindanao and other conflict-affected areas in the country."

Kuala Lumpur Mohd. Yusof, deputy permanent adviser on the peace process, said both sides had agreed to look at the provisions of Republic Act No. 9054 creating the Aarmm and "maybe bring some improvement in terms of ... the possible inclusion of those points raised in the 1996 agreement that [were] not agreed accurately."

He said this was intended "to handle the obstacle" for the full implementation of the 1996 accord and "harmonize" it with the law setting up the Aarmm.

Both sides agreed to accelerate their efforts to establish the bridges of peace and harmony and bring down the barrier of distrust and misunderstanding that have brought untold suffering and misery to many of our brothers in Mindanao and other conflict-affected areas in the country."

Capacity-building projects

"We agreed to create a legal panel to harmonize proposals on how to improve the implementation of a peace pact that created the autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao," he said.

Elaborating, ambassador the agreement between the two to propose amendments to the Aarmm law.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said this could help facilitate the peace process with the other rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Minister expressed hope that full implementation of the peace agreement would finally "break the cycle of war, cycle of expression, cycle of encumbrance, and cycle of suffering" in Mindanao.

The tripartite meeting reiterated the importance of access to building projects, and of funds and loans for the social and economic development of Mindanao.

It endorsed plans for the establishment of a peace and development fund mechanism for Mindanao with the support of OIC member countries.

2 million displaced

More than 120,000 people have died in the four decades-long conflict that has also displaced more than 2 million people.

The 1996 agreement was brokered by the OIC and Indonesia.

But peace between Manila and the MILF has proved elusive. Intermittent clashes have occurred between them in the south, forcing villagers to flee their homes.

The Abu Sayyaf bandits, a terrorist group, have also thrived on the peace in some areas with their kidnapping and bombing operations.

Last year, the government agreed to expand the ancestral homeland for Muslims in the south after talks with the MILF. But peace hopes were scuttled when violence escalated in six southern provinces. The Supreme Court voided the deal.

Reports from Associated Press, Reuters and Xinhua

Madoff: From posh penthouse to tiny jail cell

Front page A1

deeply hurt many many people, including the members of my family, my closest friends, business associates and the thousands of clients who gave me their money," Madoff told 11 District Judge Denny Chin.

'I am sorry'

"I cannot adequately express how sorry I am for what I have done," he said just before Chin ordered him to prison to await a June 16 sentencing when he will find up to 150 years in prison.

His lawyers filed a notice of appeal to a federal appeals court to get it to reconsider Chin's decision.

But one attorney for bookkeeper Madoff deserved to stay out because other high-profile white-collar criminals convicted in multibillion-dollar frauds were not jailed until sentencing, but Chin disagreed, telling prosecutors he did not even need to hear their legal arguments.

"In light of [Mr. Madoff's] age, he has no incentive to flee," Judge Chin the money to flee, and that, his presence a risk of flight," Chin said.

$65-B scandal

Madoff said "guilty" repeatedly to 11 felony counts, including securities fraud and perjury. He could also be fined and ordered to pay restitution to his victims and forfeit any illgotten gains.

In a long, detailed statement delivered in a soft but steady voice, Madoff implicated no one but himself in the vast pyramid scheme. He said he started it around the early 1990s or even earlier, but was unable to extricate himself as the years went by.

"I am eternally grateful for this opportunity to publicly [statement about my crimes, for which I am deeply sorry and profoundly ashamed," he said. The first public comments about his crime since the $65-billion scandal broke in early December after he confessed to his sons.

Symbol of greed

On Dec. 11 lawyer turned a well-respected investment professional—Madoff into core symbol of greed and corporate excesses that led to global financial crisis.

Madoff said "guilty" repeatedly to 11 felony counts, including securities fraud and perjury. He could also be fined and ordered to pay restitution to his victims and forfeit any ill-gotten gains.

THE FALL Bernard Madoff goes from an Upper East Side penthouse (right) to New York City all the way down to the 7 x 12 by 8 foot jail cell in the Metropolitan Correctional Center. He faces up to 150 years in prison for a multibillion-financial and scheme. AFP

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Prosecutors have already said they level employees in Madoff's firm believed participated by mailing out tens of thousands of phony monthly statements and sending confirmations to make it look as if customers were making money in the market.

Some investors suspect their money ended up in the hands of Madoff's family, friends and employees or determine what role, if any, they played in the scam.

Only $1-B found

In court documents, prosecutors said Madoff admitted that he owed $64.8 billion. However, experts said that the actual loss was probably much less and that the higher number reflects the false profits Madoff told investors they were making. So far, authorities have located only about $1 billion of his money.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, March 14, 2009
Third Week of Lent

1st Reading: Hos 14:2-10, 17-10
Gospel: Mk 12:1-12, 17-22

The tenants and farmers were seeking the company of Jesus, all of them eager to hear what he had to say, but the Pharisees and the scribes frowned at this, muttering, "That man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So Jesus told them this parable:

Jesus continued, "There was a man with two sons. The younger said to his father: 'Give me my share of the estate.' So the father decided his property between them.

A few days later, the younger son gathered all his belongings and started off for a distant land where he squandered his wealth in loose living. Having spent everything, he was soon pressed when a severe famine broke out in that land, so he hired himself out to one of the citizens of that place and was sent to work on a pig farm. He considered sore he dare he longed to fill his stomach even with the food given to the pigs, but no one offered him anything.

Finally coming to his senses, he said: 'How many of my father's hired workers have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will get up and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against you and God before you. I no longer deserve to be called your son. Treat me classic one of your hired workers.' With that description saved he set off for his father's house.

He was still a long way off when his father caught sight of him. His father was deeply moved with compassion that he ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. The son said: 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.'

But the father ordered to his servants: 'Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and kill it. We shall celebrate and have a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and is found.' And the celebration begins.

Meanwhile, the elder son had been working in the fields. As he returned and was near the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what it was all about. The servant answered: 'Your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father is so happy because he has ordered this celebration and killed the fattened calf.'

The elder son became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and pleaded with him. The indignant son said: 'Look, I have slaved for you all these years. Never have I disobeyed your orders. Yet you have never given me even a young goat to celebrate with my friends. Then when this son of yours returns after squandering your property with loose women, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

The father said: 'My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But this brother of yours was dead, and has come back to life. He was lost and is found. And for that we had to rejoice and be glad.'

Commentary:

The most loved parable in the gospel is the Prodigal Son. We identify with its characters, an ungrateful son who wants to go his own, an older brother quick to judge others but slow to recognize his own failings, and a father ready to love and forgive his son's return. Each of us can apply it to our own situation. I wanted to preface today's parable with a story I read somewhere. I think it was about a boy who would make me happy, make other people like me, have a doctor's son. And lately, old, hungry. Finally woke up. I went to the side place I will find warmth and food to look. In my father's house. So I swallow my pride and decide to go back. The elder brother had convinced himself not only that he was right, but that he had always done right. Just for a moment, stole at his own pride, his self-righteousness which was really pathetic. Simply put was blind to the hand of the younger brother and he still do regret the days he was that wretched. So hand out to you at this very moment.

PCOM convention ends today

THE PHILIPPINE College of Occupational Medicine, an affiliate society of the Philippine Medical Association, holds the second and final day of its 2nd annual convention today at the Manila Hotel.

With the theme "Occupational Medicine Practice: Facing the challenges of the workplace," the PCOM said it hopes to continue championing the cause of preventive, promotive and rehabilitative health, wellness and safety of workers.

PCOM has strong partnerships with both the Department of Health and Labor.

The convention is being organized by the PCOM, led by national president Dr. Rodrigo Atienza, chair Dra. Ma. Teresita Cuizon and cochair Dr. Ricardo Relagen.

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₱1.3-B poll automated machines lying idle

From page A1

ing the balance of around ₱500 million).

Hopes that the case will be resolved in the near future are dim.

Ephraim Bagtol, the Comelec lawyer in charge of the case, said the poll body had not even presented its evidence to the court.

Stance as demand

According to Comelec legal chief Ferdinand Rafanan, atty., the ex-officio of the poll body and of the Philippine Postal Corp. are discussing the transfer of election equipment stored at the Maxi-Lite warehouse to the Post Office building in Lianang Bonifacio, where rent is cheaper.

But there is no plan to include the counting machines among the equipment to be brought to the planned new location, Rafanan told the Inquirer yesterday.

"We are not transferring [the machines]," Rafanan said. "That issues will serve to [vindicate our demand to Mega Pacific to remove them machines belong to them and they should remove the money paid."

The Comelec en banc has yet to make a decision on the planned transfer, said James Jimenez, the poll body's spokesperson.

Asked about the condition of the counting machines, Jimenez said the Comelec had never opened the boxes containing the automation equipment.

Rent rates

"It do so is to admit or acknowledge that the Comelec has the right to the machines, he said, adding: "It would render our suit useless."

Rafanan said that since the Supreme Court's ruling was issued in January 2004, the machines had been stored in Maxi-Lite along with other Comelec equipment and election paraphernalia such as ballot boxes and records handled for the canvass.

Storage at Maxi-Lite, priced at ₱266 per square meter, costs the government around ₱10 million a year, according to a source at the Comelec who asked not to be named for lack of authority to speak on the record. Storage at the Post Office is cheaper by around ₱300 per square meter.

The source said the poll body was storing four fleets of the facility.

Rafanan said Mega Pacific should pay for the storage of the machines.

"The storage at the Maxi-Lite building should belong to their account, before, now, and in the future, for as long as the machines are stored there," he said.

Borra's letter

Rafanan said that as early as March 2004, the Comelec had told Mega Pacific to remove the machines from the warehouse.

The contents of a letter to the company from then Commissioner Resurreccion Borra reads:

"MPSI (Mega Pacific) is ordered to immediately retrieve or take full custody of the automated counting machines, which are all being well preserved and maintained in the Commission's Maxi-Lite warehouse. Please coordinate with the Commission as soon as possible for the proper turnover of the said machines."

But Mega Pacific ignored Borra's letter, Rafanan said. Instead, he said, the company filed a damage suit against the Comelec at Manila's RTC 2004, demanding the balance of the contract payment.

The Office of the Solicitor General filed a countersuit on behalf of the Comelec on June 28, 2004.

Flawed bidding process

It was four months before the 2004 national and presidential elections that the Supreme Court declared the contract between Mega Pacific and the Comelec null and void, saying the bidding process was flawed.

The Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines, which initiated the case, said Mega Pacific had failed to meet technical and procedural requirements.

The Comelec was then chaired by Benjamin Abalos, who quit the post on Oct. 1, 2007, at the height of the bribery scandal involving the aborted National Broadband Network contract with China's ZTE Corp.

WHAT WENT BEFORE

SC voided ₱1.2-B contract

SHORTLY AFTER THE COMMISSION ON Elections (Comelec) announced that the 2004 national and presidential polls would be automated, the Supreme Court voided the ₱1.2-billion contract that would have made it possible.

In its ruling dated Jan. 13, 2004, the high court said the Comelec en banc disregarded the law and its own bidding rules when it awarded the contract for the nomination of the counting and canvassing of ballots to Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. even before the poll body's bids and awards committee could issue a recommendation.

The high court also found Mega Pacific's counting machines vulnerable to "election fraud on a massive scale by means of just a few key strokes."

It voted 9-3-2 to nullify the contract, with three justices dissenting and two asking for more time to deliberate. It also ordered the Office of the Ombudsman to examine the criminal liability of those involved in the case.

The Comelec en banc at the time was composed of Chair Benjamin Abalos and Commissioners Luzviminda Tancangco, Nicodemo Ferrer, Rufino Javier, Resurreccion Borra, Ralph Lantion, Mehol Sadain and Florentino Tuason.

The Mega Pacific contract was executed in May 2003 and notarized the following month.

In August 2003, the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines and eight private individuals petitioned the Supreme Court to nullify the deal.

But despite the ruling, the Comelec has failed to recover the money it paid Mega Pacific. In a budget hearing in October 2008, Comelec Commissioner Nicodemo Ferrer said the refund was being delayed by a petition filed by Mega Pacific before the Makati Regional Trial Court.

The Mega Pacific contract is the second election modernization agreement that the Supreme Court has voided.

In 2001, the court scrapped the ₱4.6-billion contract for the computerization of voters' registration awarded in 2000 to the Phoenician Group. Congress had reserved only ₱1 billion for the project.

Cyril L. Bonalbono, Inquirer Research

DOJ claims 2 more witnesses to killing of Dacer, Corbito

From page A1

ing of the bodies. I don't think those are the revelations of claims," Gonzales told a news forum in the Ambassador Hotel in Manila. "I don't think those two civilians who are underaided ... who just came to me, are clowns."

Sen. Panfilo Lacson—Mancari's superior at the Philippine National Police and the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) in 2006—earlier said Mallonthing had stated "nothing to the contrary" with allegations of his supposed involvement in the Dacer-Corbito murders.

Lacson's remark was prompted by former police intelligence chief Reynaldo Berroya's own unusual statement to testify before the reconstituted panel of the Department of Justice when it starts reviewing the case.

'Very credible' affidavit

"Well, when the briefing opens, that's when we judge," Gonzales said of the credibility of the witnesses who had signified their intention to testify before the reconstituted panel.

The justice secretary had ordered the reopening of the case in anticipation of the cancellation of Alunan, who is among the 22 charged with the double murders.

Diomedio, who claims to hold a copy of Mancari's affidavit, told reporters that it would link five persons in the crime.

"It is very credible and can be corroborated," he said of the affidavit.

There is speculation that members of the opposition, notably Lacson and Joseph Estrada, who was the president at the time of the murders, are named in the affidavit. Both men have denied involvement in the killings.

Gonzalez said the details of Mancari's return to the Philippines would be confidential to ensure his safety.

The existence of his affidavit will only be revealed to the media when the new preliminary investigation has started, Gonzalez said.

The justice secretary said he had also ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to track down a police official surnamed Aranda and a driver in connection with the double murder.

'Estrada not mentioned'

According to Berroya, now the general manager of the Metro Rail Transit, there was no mention of the involvement of Estrada in the killing of Dacer and Corbito.

Berroya based his claim on the affidavit of former Senior Supt. Glenn Dumlao, another of those charged with the double murders.

He said Dumlao had also told him verbally that the killings could not have happened without Lacson's knowledge.

"Estrada was not mentioned in the killings, and I don't think it is in his character to order somebody killed," Berroya told the Inquirer when reached by phone last night.

Berroya and the deposed President are former subordinates. They patched things up as Estrada's relations with Lacson went to 2007, when President Maranggal-Arroyo pardoned him a month after his conviction of plunder.

The bad blood between Estrada and Berroya began when the former shot the late President and head of the PAOCTF, sent the latter to jail for the 1995 kidnapping of Tiu Wanson businessman Jack Uson.

Berroya did time at the Nueva Bilibid Prison for two years before he was released on Dec. 12, 1997.

Among the officials cited in Dumlao's hand-written affidavit are Marcelo and his former colleague in the PAOCTF, Michael Ray Aquino, Berroya said.

Aquino is also a respondent in the double-murder case.

Berroya was the PNP intelligence chief when Dumlao surrendered to the police a few months after the Dacer-Corbito killings and voluntarily submitted an affidavit.

Free to talk

Malacañang yesterday discussed itself from Berroya's decision to testify on the double murders.

"Berroya is free to say what he feels to say even if he's a government official. He has to go official has nothing to do [with it]. We can't prevent him from expressing his views," Undersecretary Lorelei Fajardo, Ms Berroya's deputy spokesperson, told reporters in a briefing.

Fajardo scoffed at speculations that the government was using Berroya to implicate certain personalities in the double murder.

"Definitely, we're not using Berroya. It's only now that he has come out and said he's willing to testify. We don't even know what Berroya knows about the case," Fajardo said.

"The statements are independent, and the Palace has nothing to do with anything that he wants today," she said.

Fajardo also said certain personalities should not close themselves of involvement in the Dacer-Corbito murders even before they could be officially implicated, less they be accused of guilt.

"No one should confine involvement or relationship has on accused anybody of involvement in the crime," she said. With reports from Jocelyn R. Uy and TJ Burgonio

Gov't agents raid Legacy offices

GOVERNMENT AGENTS YESterday swooped down on the offices of the dissolved Legacy Group of Companies in Makati City after its officials allegedly refused to cooperate with the investigators on the closure of its rural banks and pyramid companies.

Armed with a search warrant, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) personnel and agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) raided Legacy's main offices on the 76th floor of the World Center building on Ortiz Cortes Avenue in about 5:30 p.m.

Robert Garcons, head of SEC's compliance and enforcement department, said that since Legacy officials did not want to cooperate, "we had no other choice but to seek the help of the court."

Garcons and another SEC team raided an office of Legacy in Santa Barbarans, Quezon City.

He said the raiding teams were after computer files, names lists of plan holders, copies of insurance policies, contracts and other documents they could use to link investigators into the business processes employed by Legacy founder Celso de los Angeles that led to the closure of the companies.

"The most important thing is for us to get the hard drives of their computers so it's easier now to gain very important information that we could use," he said.

Members of the media were not allowed to enter the Legacy headquarters in Makati during the raid.

Garcons said his office would file charges of solicitation of funds and violation of the Securities Regulation Code against De los Angeles and other Legacy officials.

Court: Jamby has right to aunt's billions

From page A1

executory as it was not effectively questioned by any creditors.

The ruling was issued on Feb. 12 but was promised by Madrigal's lawyer only last Thursday.

At a press conference yesterday, Madrigal said she was "pleased" with the decision and noted that it was handed down 12 days before her aunt's death anniversary.

"This victory is in honor of her memory and a clear indication that her wishes for the poor to have a share of her estate shall now be finally respected," said Madrigal.

Madrigal Collateres, 87, who was child less, died on March 24, 2008.

Charity foundation left out

In May 2008, Madrigal went to court to contest the validity of Madrigal Collateres' will, written in September 2006, and stop the distribution of her estate's income to the five heirs named in the will. She claimed the signatures on the will had been forged. (See What Went Before.)

Madrigal noted that even her aunt's foundation was left out of the will that placed Madrigal-Collateres' properties at only P35 million. The estimate said her aunt's wealth was much more and that Madrigal Collateres had wanted to give part of her estate to specific charities.

Madrigal yesterday said that although the other parties to the suit could still seek a reconsideration of the ruling, she believed that Pimentel's order was already final and executory.

"I appeal to my other relatives to respect this decision of the court. Time is the time to end all of this. We are more than blessed with our wealth, now is the time to ensure that Tita Chito's wishes, be respected," she said.

Legal succession

In its ruling, the court instructed the lawyers of Madrigal Collateres to administer the will, and that other properties not included in P35 million worth of declared properties should be covered by the rules of legal succession.

It said that with the rules of legal succession now in operation, all legal heirs of Madrigal-Collateres, including the nearest kin, should have legal personality or participate in the proceedings.

Madrigal yesterday called on all concerned banks, financial institutions and other agencies of government to "take notice of this final and executory decision."

WHAT WENT BEFORE: Chito Madrigal's billions

MARCH 26, 2003—CONSUELO D. "CHITO" Madrigal-Collateres dies in her North Forbes Park residence.

In her will, she leaves her fortune to her husband, Manuel Collateres, a former foreign affairs minister, a rural banker-Madrigal, an older sister of her, Jimmy Madrigal, another sister, Gloria M. Gonzalez-Manotoc, and a grandnephew, Dominic P. Gonzalez-Manotoc. The will names lawyers Perry Pe and Aurelio Montinola III, the husband of Gloria, as executors and trustees of the will. (April 27—Madrigal Collateres' lawyers Perry Sanchez Pe files a motion to inform a Makati court of existing a will in which the estate decides to distribute the property to the heirs.)

May 5—Sen. Jamby Madrigal files a motion with the court questioning the validity of her aunt's last will.

May 7—Madrigal Collateres' lawyer Perry Pe asks the court to allow him to withdraw as executor, saying his duties, considered procedural to determine the validity of a person's last will.

July 3—Judge Oscar Pimentel rules that the Madrigal Collateres will is valid. He also authorizes Pe to withdraw as executor and appoints Atty. Ma. Lourdes Sereno as the successor of Pe. (On Oct. 10, 11, the executor of an estate is limited to the sale of perishable assets, taxes and claims for P25 million in cash which is necessary to pay the estate's debts.)

"The order of the court is clear that there should be no disposition of my late aunt's estate without prior order of the court. I shall oppose and exercise all legal remedies to ensure that my Tita's estate will not be vandalized," she said.

'Worth tens of billions'

Ernesto Francisco Jr., Madrigal's lawyer, said the Madrigal-Collateres estate owned around 30 corporations and numerous stocks or holdings "worth tens of billions" of pesos which needed to be catalogued.

He said the estimate would ask the court to be appointed administrator of the estate properties.

"We will go through the process of paying the required taxes and then administering the will according to the testament's wishes," he said.

The senator claimed in her suit that several valuable assets—including lots in Forbes Park and Ayala Alabang, and condominium units in Makati and Mandaluyong—had been left out of the will.

She claimed that the will also did not include overseas properties, like a $15-million apartment in New York, expensive paintings and jewelry and bank accounts with sizable deposits.

Not bias...but Court's duty

In a separate order, the court dismissed a motion from the executors of the Madrigal-Collateres will—Aurelio Montinola III and Perry Pe—to have Pimentel recuse himself from the case.

The executors claimed that the judge displayed bias in favor of Madrigal when he allowed the senator to participate in the proceedings concerning the disposition of Madrigal-Collateres' will and estate.

Pimentel said he was simply doing his duty as a judge and did not establish any basis to allow Madrigal to participate in the proceedings.

"The private handling prosecutor to the presiding judge do not constitute bias as partiality because what he did is simply the duty of a court," said the order, dated Feb. 6.

Pimentel said the executors were unable to show any valid reasons or any competent evidence that he was biased and partial to the case.

"They should know better than the presiding judge has served the judiciary for more than 37 years and would look straight in the eyes of everyone and tell them that he is an independent member of the judiciary," the order added.

Ex-wife, son deny ...

From page A1

interviewed at Caliraya's office as the Tektite Towers in Pasig, Cuneta—as she is known—insisted she and her son had nothing to do with Legacy Group and that their participation was only limited to "lending" their names as incorporators in some of her ex-husband's companies.

"She never had a penny," that 58-year-old Cuneta said.

She said she and her son were angry because they had supported De los Angeles through the years "and now we're in court."

Saying she was never actively involved in her husband's businesses—pointing out that they did not even have a joint bank account—Cuneta said she broke with him because of his "persistent womanizing."

De los Angeles' lawyer, Noel Mabasa, last night said his client was redirecting his apology to Cuneta's family in blogging from his cellphone.

"He apologizes to his family—his wife, his son and his mother—for causing this problem," Mabasa said in a phone interview.

No business participation

The lawyer also called De los Angeles but got no answer.

Mabasa said he had spoken to his client and that he did not think De los Angeles (emphasis only mentioned his wife and son) to the board of his companies to give them some semblance.

"They had no participation in the businesses," Mabasa said.

"It's true they have been estranged," Mabasa said.

Asked about De los Angeles' alleged women, the lawyer said the senator had been "openly estranged."

"He apologizes to his family for these reports," Mabasa said.

Cuneta said the couple had been separated for seven or eight years now and she had sought an annulment of their marriage.

'Gifts for girls'

Actually, theirs was an "on and off" relationship. She said she first split up with him in 1984 after four years of marriage, and they got a divorce in the United States.

But they would go back to each other and then split up again until 2000 when they finally separated. Since then, she would only see him maybe three times a year—the birthdays of their sons and of her mother-in-law and "maybe Christmas."

Cuneta said she finally left him because he had "so many girls left and right."

She claimed he was "spending so much for the women" and would give them "trucks" and "nice gifts."

Cuneta said she just kept quiet and never confronted him about them.

She said she heard of his purported involvement with an actress, and that she and the women shared the same manicurist, who has since passed away.

"He had been a creep from the start," she said.

Saying some famous family of theirs, Cuneta said she was financially independent from her husband.

Cuneta insisted she paid for the education of her son. She added she graduated from the Ateneo De Manila University in 2009.

The only conjugal property they had was the Ayala Alabang residence that she was later sold for P58 million.

The proceeds from the sale were given to her as settlement of their conjugal property and formed part of the inheritance for their children, she said.

"The properties that I have are really mine—this is his and mine is mine," Cuneta said.

Cuneta said she was shocked she and Sisa were dragged into the controversy.

She said he had told her he would continue to give financial support to their children—Sarah, 23, and Pasdo Nicholas, 20—years old—in exchange for them putting their names as incorporators of his companies.

You wouldn't fool your mom

She said she signed papers twice and did no because she saw that her mother was also signing as an incorporator.

"I didn't think you'll fool your mother," she said.

Cuneta said she only learned about the alleged massive scam in his businesses from news reports.

"After a while, I thought this is no joke," she said, adding she did not know how much he was worth.

Here, was more emotional than his mother, breaking into tears early in the interview as he spoke of his father. He teared up when he disclosed that only last month he spoke to his father, who apologized "for dragging me in the mess."

The link

Sisa described herself as the "link" between his father and Cuneta and said he considered her his as a "glorified nanny" since he graduated in 2004.

He got a monthly salary of P150,000 doing odd jobs that included "assembling a wedding" in his behalf if he can't go" and "picking up his laundry."

But he said since sold to China stopped up 1,000 motorcycles for the failed Legal Moves.

Explaining the house and lot in Pamplona that was supposedly bought by Commissioner Marilou from his father, Sisa said that initially he was surprised the property title was under his name.

"My dad gave it to me," he said. He said it was actually the sale of Marilou's son, Jesus III, also was his friend.

Being caseloads, the Marilou's loaned the house and eventually bought it from his father, Sisa said.

He said he did not get any contract from the sale.

Sorry for Pa

Sisa said he signed documents for his father "because I didn't think he will get me into trouble."

Sisa said he felt sorry for his father and hoped the latter would "survive" the cases against him.

"I feel sorry because if I'm having trouble now, what more of him," a tearful Sisa said. He also said he had been getting death threats from angry plan holders who would visit him.

"I never thought it would end this way after all these years. I hope he clears our name," Cuneta said.

No more 'pulis patolas' on TV dramas, films

From page A1

the Philippine National Police (PNP) and TV and movie executives to present a better image of the police, according to Senior Supt. Cesar Hawthorne Binag, chief of staff of the PNP's Program Management Office.

The memorandum of understanding between the PNP and the Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) would boost coordination between the two parties regarding the depiction of policemen on TV soaps and in the movies, Binag said yesterday during the 'Isikatayo sa Serbisyo Pulis (TNT) at Camp Crame.

"Of course, there will always be policemen in the movies and TV's soap operas. We just want to be consulted on whether their interpretation of us is accurate," he told the reporters.

Improving image

Citing a previous study which found that out of 100 Filipinos, only 36 had any "good impression" with policemen, Binag said a positive depiction of law enforcers would help boost public trust and confidence.

While results of recent national surveys showed that the PNP trust and sincerity ratings seemed to pick up, he observed that these failed to reflect the "improving image" of the police force.

Binag said the police were still being portrayed as "stupid" law enforcers wearing ill-fitting uniforms and speaking unkempt grammatical.

One example he cited was a soap opera aired on ABS-CBN where a brutal-minded Chabacano cop de facto played the role of a police general who secretly was a drug syndicate boss.

Other Filipino movies which portrayed law enforcers as incompetent were "Pulis Patola 1 and 2" and "Robocop," which starred Kaye Abunda and Amy Marquez, respectively.

The PNP received a 49-percent public approval rating in the July 2008 survey by Pulse Asia—the highest since 2001, according to Binag.

No. 1 problem

Although the police still received a "poor" rating in the recent Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey, the trend was already moving upward, he said.

Corruption was still the No. 1 problem in the police force, Binag said, citing reports. Police agents were also tagged as among the frequent violators of human rights in the country.

He also said the PNP met with the PNP chief, Jesse Robredo, Lacs, on Wednesday chairing its reorganization forum attended by other stakeholders.

Apparently, the meeting was in relation to PNP's call last year for TV and movie producers to stop portraying police policemen as "bumbling" cops.

HOSTAGE Calderon faces the media during a visit to her detained father AFP

RP couple to leave daughter in Japan

TOKYO—A FILIPINO COUPLE in Japan Friday agreed to follow a deportation order but will leave their 12-year-old daughter behind in a ruse that has attracted much public sympathy here, their lawyer said.

The couple face deportation because they entered the country on false passports nearly 17 years ago, but they had pleaded to be allowed to stay on their Japan-born daughter could finish her schooling in the country.

Japanese authorities have pressed the parents to leave the country. They declined the 30-year-old Satoni Arlan Cruz Calderon the stick and warned that all three would be repatriated unless the pair once more refused voluntarily.

The daughter, Nori Ilai, who was born in Japan and speaks only Japanese, will soon stay in the country with the relatives of her mother, Ilai, while the parents plan to leave Japan on April 13, lawyer Shoga Watanabe told AFP.

More than 10,000 people in Japan have signed a petition asking the government to allow all three to stay.

The case has attracted the attention of Attorney Eleonor Attos as well as the UN Human Rights Council, which has asked for information about the case. AFP

More hogs to be tested

By Riza T. Dichoso

SOME 10,000 HOGS FROM backyard farms in Luzon will be tested for the Ebola Reston virus (ERV) following the culling of 6,000 pigs in Bataan, Bulacan.

The agriculture department said yesterday that the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) will test blood samples from 3,000 barangays across Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon provinces) and Pangasinan province.

The BAI is prioritizing testing in these areas to make sure the virus does not spread from the Pasak farm and from another one in Barangay, Pequinian, Orani, Bataan.

Central Luzon, Pangasinan and Calabarzon host about nine million hogs out of the country's total hog population of 13 million, the agriculture department said.

Rod director Dionisio Garibay said the BAI will test blood and tissue samples from the 6,000 culled hogs in Bataan before testing samples from the 10,000 pigs.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap will also ask the US government to ensure the supply of uninfected hay, added Garibay.

Economists see drop in remittances

CASH SENT HOME BY FILIPINOS living and working abroad will likely fall this year for the first time since 2001 as the global downturn threatens jobs and squeezes wages across the globe, a Bangko Sentral survey showed.

The median forecast of 10 economists was for remittances to drop six percent this year, the biggest fall in nine years, and translating to about $15.4 billion.

The Bankers Journal ng Pilipinas has projected the size of remittances this year will be mostly following seven straight years of double digit growth.

The Bangko Sentral forecasts ranged from no change to a fall of 20 percent.

Downside

"The downside on OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances is underscored at the moment because people are still looking at positive growth," said Joey Cuyegkeng, an economist with ING Bank.

"But, when you look at the profile of those deployed, they are in vulnerable sectors like manufacturing and construction, still largely blue collar type of work," he said.

The latest data available showed that remittances in December rose 0.8 percent from a year earlier to $1.44 billion, the smallest monthly rise since April 2006.

But total remittances in 2008 were a record $16.4 billion, a rise of 13.7 percent from 2007.

The labor department said only 3,309 Filipinos, mostly from Taiwan, have so far lost their jobs overseas since October, when the global financial crisis blew up.

The government agency monitoring workers' overseas deployment still processes at least 3,000 job applications everyday.

Last year, close to 1.4 million Filipinos moved abroad for work, suggesting close to 4,000 a day.

Cash sent home by Filipino migrants—most of which originates from the United States—is one of Philippines' top sources of foreign exchange and an important source for consumer spending.

Skewed to US

But analysts said the data may be erroneously skewed to the United States mainly because remittances sent through branches of US banks anywhere in the world tend to be consolidated and reimbursed from those banks' US-based headquarters.

About a tenth of the country's 90 million people live and work abroad due to low wages and lack of opportunities at home.

A drop in remittance would weigh on the economy by keeping a lid on domestic consumption.

The International Monetary Fund has forecast the Philippine economy will grow 2.2% percent this year, lower than the government's 3.5-4.5 percent targets and a 3.8 percent consensus forecast in a Reuters poll last month.

Reuters

NBI asked to name Samar solon in fake bills

By Ed Cabuenas Jr.

SAMUEL HARIS.

The House of Representatives yesterday urged the National Bureau of Investigation to identify the Samar representative who allegedly ordered the printing of as much as P100 million in bogus money as it launched its own investigation of the case.

"To be fair to all Samar congressmen and the House, the NBI should make a full categorical report stating names, complete addresses, documentary and testimonial evidence. The House should investigate this very serious accusation," said Bantaqui Rep. Rolando Golez in a text message to reporters.

The NBI reported Thursday that it arrested two members of a syndicate involved in manufacturing fake peso bills. The two claimed they received orders from one Rep. Talino to print as much as P100 million in counterfeit peso for scheme congressman.

Of the five congressional representing the province, only Eastern Samar Rep. Teodorico M. Coquilla admitted that he had been invited for questioning by NBI agents yesterday.

"I don't know anything about the case but I am willing to answer their questions. Siempre Sec. (Rolando) Mendoza pa (former Eastern Samar governor) si Ilanza and four other congressmen," said Coquilla in a phone interview.

Northern Samar Rep. Paul Daza, on the other hand, doubted any involvement in the fake currencies incident while three other Samar Representatives—Emil Ong (second district) Narciso Antiol I, Sharee Ann Tan and Reynaldo Uy, both from Western Samar, could not be reached for comment.

Although he had not invited by the NBI to shed light on the incident, Daza said he was willing to go if asked.

"It's a serious offense, and I think it is in the interest of every one to name the Samar congressman since there are five of us in the House," Daza told reporters.

Hot and getting hotter

TEMPERATURE IN METRO MANILA HIT A record-high of 38.1 Celsius last Thursday and could equal even more scorching days ahead.

The reading was taken at around 3 p.m. at the Pagasa Science Garden in Diliman, Quezon City.

This is on for the highest temperature recorded for March, according to Nonoy Abese of the Philippine atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

"And it could get [worse]" especially when you consider that the nearby station Institute of Agrilife may not still re-come, said Abese.

Significantly, Tuguegarao in the Cagayan Valley, the country's "hottest" spot, recorded only 30 Celsius last Thursday.

In Metro Manila yesterday, maximum temperature was recorded at 33.6 Celsius, values at around 3 p.m. at the Science Garden. Humidity was at 54 percent.

The highest temperature recorded in Metro Manila was 38.5 Celsius on May 14, 1987.

The record for the highest temperature in the country is 42.2 Celsius recorded on May 11, 1969 in Tuguegarao.

The weather bureau warned the public to stay indoors or in the shade during the hours between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to avoid the common illnesses associated with extremely high temperatures like heatstroke, heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

Pagasa said that summer this year will be "hotter and longer than usual" because of the early start of the hot season.

The weather experts officially started on the last week of February until its supposedly end around the second week of May.

Pagasa said Ramon Vitorio and Mildanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms this weekend.

The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with scattered rain showers or thunderstorms, mostly in the afternoon or evening.

Alexis Pajes

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OPINION

Cleansing the voters' list

EDITORIAL

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT AUTOMATED ELECtions edged closer to reality after the House of Representatives passed on third and final reading, earlier this month, the P11.3-billion poll automation budget. The Senate is expected to pass the counterpart measure, soon.

The bad news is, the voters' list remains unexpurgated. The preponderance of flying and ghost voters continues to be a serious problem in our electoral system. Thus, the potential for election fraud and cheating remains rife. Thus, the existing voters' list could be disastrous for our country's troubled democracy. This problem should not be belittled by the Commission on Elections.

The Comelec under its chair, former Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo, may have successfully penned for the computerization of the 2010 elections, but lest we forget, automated voting cannot be a foolproof system unless the voters' list is purged.

Therefore, hand in hand with its efforts to computerize the elections next year, the Comelec should clean up the voters' list by completing the biometric registration and identification of qualified voters. This would mean delisting and getting rid of flying and ghost voters—no more, no less—if only to ensure clean, orderly and credible elections.

But the castle the biometric registration of voters remains unfinished despite the astronomical cost of P1 billion having been poured on the effort since 2004. A Comelec report has shown that only 24 million, or half of the 48 million registered voters, are covered by biometric listing.

Therefore, aside from computerizing the elections, the Comelec should conduct an information and education campaign so that the rest of the voting population would register under the new system. Such a campaign, to be effective and effective, should mean, understandably, tens of millions of pesos.

And there may be a need for Congress to enact a law penalizing those who would fail to register—at the least, by delisting them from the voters' list and disqualifying them from voting in the 2010 and future elections. Admittedly, this may be a draconian measure, but there's a need to be tough. Admittedly, too, passing this measure might entail an uphill struggle. Through ghosts and illegal voters has many a politician cheated his way to victory and perpetuated himself in power, denigrating the cornerstone of our republic.

It is very important that the cleansing process of our troubled and fraud-prone electoral system should start and, perhaps, also end with the cleansing of the voters' list. This would mean the Comelec providing every precinct with a clean list of voters so that elections could start on the right note and on the right footing. To rationalize the cleansing, perhaps the Comelec could conduct random checks of households, starting with areas where there are an unusually large number of registered voters.

Be that as it may, the full automation of the elections in 2010 would be a big leap forward for Philippine democracy. The Comelec should be given the chance to make computerization work if only to increase and, perhaps, save Philippine democracy from the international embarrassment largely caused by the Comelec's poor record in running elections, particularly during the time of Mrs's immediate predecessor, Benjamin Abalos.

There's already something going for computerization: its past success in minimizing fraud and violence in the last elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

In this light, it is best to follow the advice of Mrs's former colleague in the Supreme Court, retired Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, who said that postponing poll automation would be a "setback for democracy." He also said, "I think it is important, even indispensable, that we automate the elections not because automation is necessarily foolproof, but it is much better than our old, antiquated manual elections."

How true.

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The quest for new leaders

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

FILIPINOS KNOW INSTINCTIVELY THAT THE election season has started when the newspapers down the presidential dramas to about five businessmen. The three of the so-called "presidentiables" got front-page treatment. Homegrown tactics their principals against the peril of peaking too early, and dramatic potential candidates for home positions from making their commitments prematurely. The analysts chime in with their assessments of alignments in the land the voters of politicians BE the attorneys, creating a sense of a nation taking an so collective habit seriously.

But are we? Are we serious with the courses we've chosen our leaders? Surveys fulfill a vital function in a democracy. They make science capture the promise of light in the political firmament, but they cannot tell if it is the brightness of sun or merely of satellites. I suggest that we do not allow surveys to drive, preempt, or determine the process of leadership recruitment. To do so would be to place the nation's future in the hands of political financiers who are essentially lay, and of dominant media outlets peddler in the latest rumors and intimations of charisma.

In mature democracies, political parties prepare for elections by building a series of contacts with their constituencies. The aim of these meetings is to identify the key issues that resonate with the people in the different regions. The issues that are expressed by these concerns mirror the values of the party...for an issue becomes an issue precisely because there is a felt threat to fundamental values.

The identification of leaders is intimately linked to this process. It is not the case that the leaders just emerge from this process nor are only reflect the party's stand or the issues. More than that, they personify at that process moments, the urgent yearnings and aspirations of the party, if not of the whole nation. They are leaders because they stand for something that resonates with others. They are not leaders merely because they got to the heads to stand for election.

There is great advantage, obviously, even in this system, to being a good speaker and having a charismatic personality. But here charisma has to be validated, and placed on the service of the party's program. Barack Obama had to go through this grueling exercise, painstakingly building his immense charisma, and those were moments when the media chose to swing the Democratic nomination to the most progressed Hillary Clinton. On the other hand, John McCain's liberal and uninspiring presidency did not prevent the Republicans from choosing him as their standard bearer in our system, in contrast, it's the other way around—former populist or military status (or "winnability") are only names that, it is the main factor. The political program becomes no more than an afterthought, a catalogue of wished lists with an internal coherence.

What issues take the forefront—qualifications, competence, political record, personality, or even political values—do not matter as much as the whole system gets framed with perceptions. As observational tools, surveys are generally indifferent to the basis of this popularity. They may alert us, as they sometimes do, to the state of the prevailing political consciousness...but they do not make it their business to fathom the depth or shallowness of voter preferences.

Yet, as he has, even Filipino politicians know that it is not enough to be merely popular. Not that they would demand of themselves that popularity must be patriotic or a virtue, but straight that popularity has to be converted into votes. Given the weaknesses of our political system, what this means basically is that our politicians are expected to have enough money to ensure that their bets actually register to vote that their supporters are not bungle, that their votes are actually counted, and that they have adequate protection against all forms of vote-padding and manipulation.

In general, these are practical concerns that acutely every aspiring politician to vote for seats...to the various operators that inhabit the system. They exist at all levels of the political system—from the barangay to the national level. They are the political entrepreneurs who keep the machinery of the patron-client system running. They fix, they facilitate, they organize votes, and they bridge the gap between levels, acting as part-time agents for the politicians who ride them to seek elective and give them support. They are however not the real problem.

The more dangerous are the king-makers with the fabulous war chests. These masters of the vote-economy are the most vicious segment of the Filipino elite. It is they who think of politics not as a means to assert the supremacy of the economy, and of government as merely a department in a business empire. When the politics of a country is captured by such kingmakers, leadership is divorced from the national interest, and is removed and tainted just like any other commodity.

This is where we are today. We need listeners of those who style themselves as alternative leaders, when they are no more than the new scions of the same business lines that have monopolized economic and political power in our country since independence. We need leaders who are cognizant of their roles as servants of the people and as holders of the public. We must actively search for them in the bosom of our own communities, for their names will not figure in the surveys, nor will they be identified for us by the king-makers.

* * *

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Is MDG 1 within our reach?

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION—SIGNED by 189 member states of the United Nations in 2000—is certainly being taken seriously by those body from after the signing, eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were identified, and 18 targets and 48 indicators. (Another four targets and indicators were added five years later.) Also, an independent advisory body—the Millennium Project—was formed (headed by Jeff Sachs) to develop a concrete action plan for achieving the MDGs. Since then, a number of reports monitoring the progress in achieving the targets by 2015 at the regional, national, and subnational levels have been made.

The latest here—the ultimate indication of the seriousness with which the Declaration has been taken—is that an international conference was convened in 2002 in Mexico (attended by national and international "big guns") to talk about how the implementation of MDGs was to be financed. The outcome was the "Monterrey Consensus" which has since been used as a major reference point for international development cooperation.

Given all these, a logical question would be: What is the impact, what is the effect of achieving the MDG goals as far as the world is poor at, and the Philippines in particular, is concerned?

To as far as the world is concerned, according to the Millennium Project report, achieving the MDGs would mean that 300 million people would be lifted out of extreme poverty (living below 1$ purchasing power parity) (US$1 a day); more than 100 million would no longer suffer from hunger; 30 million more children will reach their 5th birthday; the lives of 2 million mothers will be saved; 250 million fewer people will be without safe drinking water, and 650 million fewer people will live without the basic of living. Also, 100 million slum dwellers will have more and more dignified lives; hundreds of millions more women and girls will go to school, have access to economic and political opportunity, and have greater security and safety.

Fantastic. And how much will all these cost? The estimates vary greatly. The lowest is $50 billion a year (presented at the Monterrey Conference). The World Bank estimates the cost of achieving Goal 1 (halving the proportion of people whose income is less than PPP US$1 a day) at $144 to $162 billion a year, and the other goals at $135 to $175 billion a year. (The less should not be aggregated, per the study, in order to avoid "double counting," as the achievement of Goal 1 may make it easier to achieve the other goals.) The Millennium Project's estimates are on the order of US$121 billion in 2006, rising to $189 billion in 2015. Those figures are pretty hard to comprehend—but by private orders of magnitude, the long war has been estimated to cost the United States $435 million a day or $159 billion a year, the estimated US GDP in 2006 was $13.06 trillion, which means that the US spends about one-dozen times the entire MDG financing needs for 2006, the amount would represent less than 1 percent of its GDP (0.93 percent). In comparison, for four years, the United States spent every year roughly 1.3 percent of its GDP to 3 percent for the Marshall Plan for rebuilding postwar Europe.

In other words, the MDG is eminently "financiable," even if the responsibility were only in the hands of one country. For the developed countries together, it is eminently presents.

What are the stakes and costs for the Philippines? Adopting the methodology used by the Millennium Project, our country's achieving its MDG targets by 2015 translates to, among others, more than 18 million people lifted out of poverty; more than 2 million people no longer suffering from hunger; 240,000 more children reaching their fifth birthday; the lives of 12,000 mothers saved; 9.7 million more people with access to safe drinking water. Again, the results would be fantastic, if they could be achieved.

What will it cost us to do so? Chat Manasan of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) has estimated that to achieve Goal 1 (halving poverty), the costs would total, for the nine-year period covering 2007-2015, P1.3 trillion; the cost of achieving the education, health, and water/sanitation goals would range from P2.3 trillion to P2.7 trillion. These are roughly the same as the Millennium Project's estimates, adjusted.

Can the Philippines afford it? Manasan estimates that using different cost and growth assumptions, the Philippines will have to raise anywhere from P600 billion to P1 trillion more in real over the nine-year period in order to close the gap between the required and the available amounts.

Can that gap be filled? The short answer is yes. Think of it this way: On the average, that amount represents something between 1 and 1.5 percent of GDP a year. If we can increase our real tax ratio (the ratio of taxes collected in taxes divided by GDP) by that amount, then there will be no problem. Is that too much to ask? Not at all, if we consider that our current tax effort ratio is about three percentage points lower than the average for Asean.

This then is the perfect segue to Bert Emilio, on meeting Goal 1. Five simulations show that indeed it can be met if: (1) the pro-rich tax policy is oil provisions increases is at least three times the 2004 national average by 2015; (2) all Batangas have access to electricity by 2008; and (3) all the land redistribution programs under CARP is fully implemented.

That's a pretty clear roadmap. But there are none so blind as those who will not see.

ARMM voters liked their automated elections

THE COUNTRY'S FIRST TRIAL OF AUTOMATED elections, which took place in the August 2008 elections for officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), was very successful from the voters' points of view, according to a post-election survey in ARMM by Social Weather Stations.

The sample of 900 ARMM adults polled last Dec. 7-14, 84 percent said that the election process was improved—42 percent said "definitely," and another 42 percent said "probably"—by automation. On the other hand, 12 percent said the process probably did not improve, and 3 percent said it got worse

Even the waiting is costly

LETTERS

AFTER THE SIGNING BY PRESident Macapagal-Arroyo of Republic Act 9502, also known as the Universality Accessible Cheaper and Quality Medicines Act of 2008, nothing much about it has happened. Medicines are still expensive, according to Paul Hamel. (Inquirer, 2/23/09) Hamel asked when this law will be fully implemented.

I am also a regular buyer of "maintenance" medicines and I fully agree with Hamel. As a matter of fact, the prices of some medicines have even gone up.

Who may be responsible for the delayed implementation of the law? Is it the Department of Health, the Bureau of Food and Drugs, the local government units or some other agencies or entities? It is hoped that the delay is due to some unavoidable circumstances and not to some deliberate acts meant to favor vested parties which may include pharmaceutical companies, drugstore owners or even smugglers.

It's time to enquire where the delay to the implementation of the law is normal. For several months now, the people have been expecting cheaper medicines to become available in the market. But even the wait for cheaper medicines they can no longer afford.

—ERNESTO DE LUNA,
Bust, Camarines Norte

One way of stopping Ebola-Reston

THE EBOLA-RESTON VIRUS THAT has brought cruel death to thousands of pigs in Pasil, Pulilan is devastating, but refreshingly predictable.

What will we realize that the only thing that we can do is safeguard our health and effectively stop the spread of such diseases to us per scriptural law.

Its very theme are so disgusting. It was crowded and filthy that they are perfect disease reservoirs for the spread of everything—from Ebola to mad cow to avian flu. What made this particular outbreak all the more throbbing was the inhumane way in which the sickly starving and suffering pigs were killed. A bullet to the brain is not a humane way of killing animals. Officials have admitted that many of the pigs suffered multiple gun shot wounds when police resorted to shooting them to death after the energetic they were using stopped working.

Stella, slaughterhouse are no horrors. Every year, millions of pigs are living spirits down and shoulders death, often while they're still conscious. Pigs feel pain every bit as much as humans do, see how, first at the right and mind of the slaughterhouse, and are afraid to die. Like us, they fight for their lives and struggle to avoid suffering. Whether they're being killed because of disease or to become dinner here, there is no reason for any pigs to die such tragic, violent deaths.

Preventing Ebola and saving countless animals from pain and suffering are so easy as switching to a vegetarian diet. For more information, please visit PETAAsia-Pacific.com.

—MARIA PERSONIFIC SALOM,
campaign coordinator,
People for the Ethical Treatment
of Animals-Asia Pacific

Lacson's side of Mancao's story

IT IS IMPORTANT TO SAY THAT the March 7 Inquirer editorial ("Who is covering Ping?") took Sen. Panfilo Lacson's statements as "persuasive and current" just because nobody is painting a finger yet at anyone in light of former police officer Cezar Mancao's supposed "tell all" affidavit regarding the disappearance of Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and Emmanuel Corbito.

While it is true that the content of the affidavit is yet to be made public, it is also an established fact that, for the last nine years, the senator has been blamed—even convicted, evidently, albeit unfairly and without basis, for their disappearance.

It is for this reason that the senator mentioned recently the attempt of some quarters to influence Mancao and his testimony. Mancao personally refuted this information, which was confirmed on March 6 by his lawyer in the United States in an interview over a Manila-based radio station.

If anybody is anyone currently sending the misdirected truth pot to end the baseless accusation flying around, the person is Senator Lacson.

—GERRY DE BELEN,
media relations officer,
Office of Sen. Panfilo Lacson

ANAKBAYANIA rally in front of the US Embassy

War on terror also a war over women's bodies—TFSR

THE CONTINUOUS DETENTION of Daniel Smith at the US Embassy, despite the Supreme Court's ruling on his transfer to a Philippine detention facility, is a mockery of Philippine law, for all practical intents and purposes, the US Embassy is not under any Philippine authority. Therefore, the United States is blatantly obstructing justice to protect a convicted American rapist. Smith has clearly undergone a criminal trial, been found guilty and sentenced to prison. With or without the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), the inmate deserves to serve his sentence under the full custody of Philippine authorities and to a Philippine correctional facility.

That Smith continues to stay at the US Embassy explains why the Philippines is never taken seriously by his own government. The Philippine government gladly allows American to feed it by the nose and treat Philippine laws with contempt and insult. Allowing a convicted American rapist to stay inside US Embassy grounds while placing Filipino convicts in the many jails cleanly indicates a double standard in the justice system.

Smith's case represents the daily burden of violence suffered by Filipino women. Experiences of women in Japan, Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries, where there's American assembly presence, proved that US troops rape women wherever they are stationed. This fact should be carefully considered in any agreement with the United States. It is especially true for the VFA. After all, this agreement is renewable and can be terminated upon proper notice to the other party. The VFA's ambiguous provisions on criminal jurisdiction have proven to be disastrous to the Philippine side. While American rapists still get prosecuted and punished in their own country, they are awarded and protected in the Philippines.

It is the end the Filipino people should decide on the validity of the VFA. The agreement is a weapon wielded against Philippine sovereignty and dignity. To the hundreds of women raped by American troops worldwide, the VFA is a weapon is also a war over women's bodies.

In the Philippines, we are still repelling foreign occupation in our minds and hearts. We are marching by the side of our countrymen in between with national demonstrations, "Mayapas nasi End VFA! End American occupation!"

—JINGGING L. SANTOS,
BALIT BOQUIEN, YVES ARNAS,
Task force Subic Bape (TFSB)
ecobar@pacific.net.ph Manikan Pat-
ranasan Pinyahan, Quezon City

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Baptism unlikely done in Batangas in 1542

I READ THE HIGHLY INFORMATIVE ARTICLE "Who are you? Mormons have the answer" by Erastus L. Abeo, (Inquirer, 1/13/09) The claims of the Mormons that the oldest documents in Quezon City temple is "... a baptismal record signed in 1542, just two decades after Ferdinand Magellan landed in the Philippines, which was found in a monastery's vault in Batangas," prove nothing sensational at all. In all probability, that baptism (if it was a Roman Catholic one) took place elsewhere in the Philippine archipelago, but definitely not in Batangas. There is absolutely nothing in Philippine history that could even suggest that a Spanish Catholic priest would have landed in Luzon, particularly in Batangas, and administered a baptism and then issued a baptismal record in 1542, which the article suggests.

Philippine historical records clearly indicate that the earliest Spanish landing in Luzon happened only around 1569, when a Spanish force of 300 Mexican soldiers, led by the Spanish "conquistadores" Don Martin de Goiti and Don Juan de Salcedo, coming from Panay Island, landed in Bulacan, Batangas, which was mentioned in the article as the "oldest town," is definitely debatable. Flowing through the town were the glacial waters of the Pansipit River, which quickly attracted the Spaniards, exploring the river farther inland, they finally reached its source where they beheld Taal Lake and its smoking volcano in all its splendor. On their way back to their galleon, however, the Spaniards took a detour and attacked by Tagalog warriors who were under the command of the fiery Tabu Kamatsing, the chieftain of Balayan. Suffering numerous casualties, the conquistadores fled back to Panay, licking their wounds, as a formidable professional army remained unbridled to one leg of the young Don Juan de Salcedo.

It was only after the conquest of Maynila in 1571 that a few Spanish friars began their missionary work in the city. It took a few more years for them to penetrate Batangas and persuade the brave Batanguenos to submit themselves to Roman Catholic baptisms.

—ESTEVE L. ALAVE,
historian,
History Club of Isagani,
Villa Elisha, 2009 Angeles City

The dates on the oldest record name from the Family History Center. According to the center, the oldest record name from a Batangas church is 1542. [EDS. Batan is mentioned, officials of the center said they would ask them to look into their archives. Again, thank you.

—ESTEVE L. ALAVE,
reporter, Inquirer

There exists an avenue for a peace agreement

THE PROBLEM, FROM THE VERY START OF the peace talks has been the issue of sovereignty and the Constitution. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) insists that the peace talks should be out of the realm of the Philippine Constitution, a precondition that no sovereign nation will ever buy with. Even the most prominent members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) admire the nation, and Libya, the latter in no uncertain terms that "peace negotiations must not go beyond the bounds of Philippine sovereignty. Libya insisted on this precondition when it brokered the peace pact between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the government, and it saw no reason that this same rule should not apply to the MILF and Philippine government in their negotiations for peace.

Yet do not think that the government's peace negotiating panel can go beyond the limits of the Constitution. Therefore it will be foolhardy for the MILF to conclude demand and insist on reaching an agreement based on the unconstitutional issue which the Supreme Court had declared unconstitutional.

But all is not lost if only the negotiating panels revisit the existing Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act which provides ample mechanisms that can adequately address the territorial issues. The panels can also look at the political structure of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and see which features are flawed and need fine-tuning in order to effectively address the issue of self-determination.

Indeed there were towns and barangays which had wanted to be with the ARMM but were excluded because of legal impediments. These towns and barangays can be included in the territory by simple congressional amendment. But to include those territories that did not even participate in the ARMM plebiscite (though listed in the proposed but failed Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain) is illegal. It does not require an expertise to know that by doing so would violate the RA 9054.

Time is of the essence. We are not happy with the so-called isolated encounters between the MILF and government troops because these can escalate into another large-scale bloody confrontation where most of the victims will be civilians. The MILF and the government should talk. To be sure, there is always an avenue for a peace agreement somewhere.

—BENJAMIN MENDIOLA JR.,
newsscribe@yahoo.com

sunday INQUIRER magazine

Sam Oh Takes a Bite of the Exotic this Sunday!

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Across the NATION

Panlilio meets anti-'jueteng' body

It was first conference of council in 20 years

CITY OF SAN FER nando—Calling it a delayed but decisive move, Gov. Eddie Panlilio convened the anti-jueteng council for the first time here yesterday.

The initial meeting drew the top leaders of the Pampanga Mayors' League (PML), several provincial board members, officials of the Department of Interior and Local Government, provincial and local police chiefs, provincial prosecutors office and leaders of the Pampanga Anti-Gambling Council (PAGC).

Panlilio said he should have organized the council as early as 2008 following his issuance of Executive Order No. 47 on Dec. 16, 2007.

The delay came as the DILG, National Police Commission and the Philippine National Police did not heed his request in the last 21 months to get a provincial police director who could help him eradicate the underworld kingpin in the province, he said.

1st in 20 years

It was the first time in 20 years that a governor convened such a group and mobilized various sectors to battle the illicit game that becomes large-scale and syndicated in Pampanga, since after the 1986 People Power Revolution.

As chair of the council, Panlilio tasked on Senior Supt. Gil Lubio Jr., acting provincial police chief and council vice chair, to implement Republic Act 9287 or the revised anti-illegal gambling law.

The assembly began with tension as Candaba Mayor Jerry Delayo denied the existence of the illegal numbers game in his town.

"I will resign (should you be able to do that)," Delayo said. The governor, a Catholic, gamely proceeded with the meeting.

Lubio said the council will meet with officials of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office on April 15 to clarify if Bureau Corp., which the PCSO authorized to run the government-restricted Small Town Lottery (STL) in the province, has obtained a provincial board resolution and business permit to operate the game.

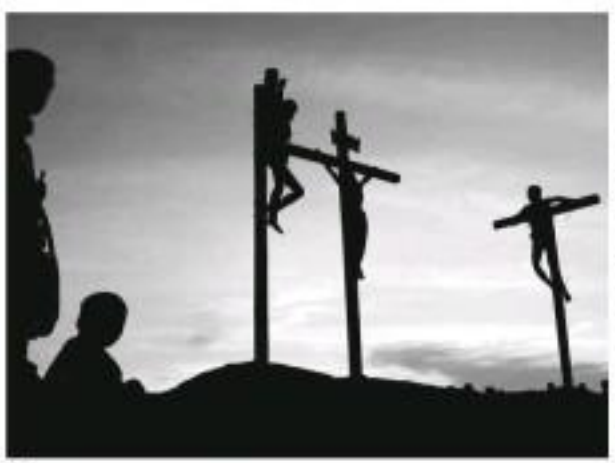
Irregularities

Panlilio has named several alleged irregularities in STL operations, among them the commission of receipts for bet payments and the non-award of serial numbers on bet tickets.

Mayor Edgardo Pamintuan, PML secretary general, said the PML supports the council and its objectives. There, he said, were to commence with the directive of President Macapagal-Arroyo last month to "stop anything illegal in the province."

"We don't want illegal activities. Among problems because of economic conditions," Flores said.

PML president and Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda did not attend the meeting. His father, Rodolfo "Boy" Pineda, a known big cockfighter (hot collectors) and sabong (area manager) at the operator of STL and Jueteng, which Mayor Pineda denied. **Tonnie Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon**



LENT
Villagers take part in a station of the cross at the Kana-kana Hill in Ligao City in Albay, dressing them as the top of the hill are three large crosses resembling those that stood in Calvary during Jesus' crucifixion.

Farm villages protest small-scale mining

BANAYBANAY, DAVAO ORIENTAL—Residents of this farming town have joined hands with environmentalists in raising alarm over the proliferation of small-scale mining operations in a mountain village near the Compostela Valley boundary.

The Save Banaybanay River Alliance (Sabare) called on Gov. Corazon Malanyaon to stop mining operations in the tribal areas of Anagkon and Tubon in Banaybanay Municipality, a barangay village in Lupon town.

Sabare chair Felix Abejon said here Thursday his group was alarmed by the mining activities in declare over 94,000 hectares of land area in the farming watershed as a protected area.

"Mine wastes from records are dumped into the river, making the water level shallow and losing is rich water resources," Mejon said.

Mejon, who is also head of a farmers' association in the town, led a party of environment advocates, local officials and journalists on a fact-finding mission to the area.

"It was an appalling sight," he said. Logs are strewn all over and mine wastes had turned the river brown.

Abejon said at least 30 small-scale operators formed a cooperative to mine the area, but complained that some also mine there.

Mejon said concerns about the dangers of mining in the area had been raised since last year, prompting the towns of Lupon and Banaybanay to pass resolutions asking the provincial government of Davao Oriental to ban mining.

Local officials also feared that continued mining in the area would destroy the Standing and mine wastes had turned watershed and cause an environmental calamity.

"We need to act together now," town councilor Lionel Tawo said.

Edwin Tagura, a 47-year-old farmer from Barangay Kang-an here, said his yield fell to 60 sacks per hectare in the last cropping season compared to his previous harvest of 120 sacks because chemical wastes like cyanide and mercury, which are being dumped on the river from the mining site, found their way into his farm.

Princess Lim, Inquirer Mindanao

Waste processing plant allowed to finish its job

SAN PABLO CITY—THE PROhibited Clean Earth Solutions International Inc. (CESI), engaged in the recycling and disposal of hazardous wastes, has been allowed to temporarily operate to finish the treatment of all the remaining toxic wastes inside its plant in the village of San Antonio 1 along the Maharlika Highway.

Ben Catena, plant operation and licenses, said 13 Forest workers had been ordered since Feb. 23 to dispose of and treat an estimated 300 tons of hazardous wastes that are still inside their premises.

"We have a special permit to operate, but until "After our work is completed, the plant will again be closed and will totally stop its operation."

Nilo Tamoña, head of the Inspectorate and Enforcement and Natural Resources Celebration (Center-Laguna-Batangas-Real-Quezon) region, said the plant is being monitored.

Nilor all the sacks of wastes had all been treated, the plant will be finally closed," he added.

Garon estimated that the work will be completed in three months.

In the past two years and six months, hundreds of steel and plastic drums that used to contain toxic industrial wastes, were controlled inside the plant, spreading stench and threatening groundwaters in the village.

CESI's woes started in September 2006 when govern ment authorities discovered unauthorized toxic dump sites in Cambinila and Sariaya towns in Quezon province.

The owners of hazardous factory wastes found in the dumps were forced to have reclaimed from the CESI compound.

The DENR ordered the firm to stop operations while the DENR-Pollution Adjudication Board imposed a P7.4-million fine on CESI.

Village officials, led by village chief Jaeler Iseris, thanked the DENR for allowing the plant to temporarily operate but vowed not to allow a similar place in the village anymore. **Delfin Z. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon**

NEWSBRIEFS

■ SORSOGON CITY

2 dead as boat sinks

PATI TODAGUEROS remain missing two of three companions survived when their boat capsized Wednesday in Casiña town, Sorsogon, police said yesterday.

Chief Insp. Dennis de Leon of the Casiña police, in a phone interview, identified the victims as Albert Talisoy, 17, and Eric Dasiga, 18, both residents of Bulusan, Legazpi City.

The two survivors were Rich Raymund Baylon, 15, and Bill Dayro, 16, also residents of Bonsame village.

De Leon said the four were supposed to attend a wedding feast of a friend at about 1:30 p.m. when big waves smashed into the boat they were riding, capsizing it in Sapsican.

"They did not know how to swim," said De Leon.

It took police at least three hours to recover the bodies of the two teenagers. **Roy Cervallo, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

■ COTABATO CITY

Cops stop clan war

A FAMILY feud in Pikit, Lanao del Sur was rekindled anew and appeared to be heading for worse unless the two sides are pacified, the police said.

The feud, flash between the Balindong and Ibn Kalandong families occurred on Saturday that killed Flaire Sambilan, village chief of Barangay Dalag, Jose Abad Santos, said Senior Supt. Pedrasin Adap, Lanao del Sur police chief.

Adap said an undetermined number of residents had fled, prompting him to send policemen to the area.

He said he had asked for the deployment of soldiers, too.

Adap said a dialogue was being conducted to prevent further bloodshed. **Zhandi C. Zoilan, Inquirer Mindanao**

■ BATANGAS CITY

Boy finds grenade

A GRADE 3 pupil who was playing at their backyard in Barangay Bolo, Batangas on Tuesday accidentally unearthed a hand grenade, police said Wednesday.

Supt. Ezenna Monreca, Batangas police chief, said that at around 10 a.m. Tuesday, barangay officials called for police assistance on the pupil's find.

Responding police and explosive Regional Bomb Squad operatives immediately secured the area.

They detonated the grenade in an open space away from the village.

Monreca said the boy noticed the grenade for a toy and showed it to his mother.

Monreca said the grenade had no pin attached to it so it could explode on impact or if hit by a hard object. He said the grenade may be from World War II. **Marah Ardo Lesaca, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

Ancient Japanese dolls take Baguio center stage

BAGUIO CITY—MIRIS SESSION Road here was closed to traffic last week, ancient Japanese dolls and Cordillera-inspired kimonos took center stage.

For the First time since World War II, a complete set of Japanese traditional dolls was displayed on the week-long Session Road in Bloom to celebrate the 11th Panagbenga festival.

The ancient dolls, mostly dressed in kimonos, were in their best to residents and tourists, mostly children who traveled with their parents, to join the trip in the annual flower festival.

Several people seized to buy the rare collection but the Japanese Association in Northern Luzon Inc. (JANI) said the dolls were "strictly for your eyes only."

Hidetosha Ogoni, JANI president, said the ceremonial dolls (hina-ningyo) dressed in the traditional court costumes of ancient Japan were donated by a Japanese family in Fukuhara City to the group. The exhibit was organized to promote Japanese culture in Baguio.

"We are making efforts to introduce Japanese cultures to local people as a part of cultural exchange to improve mutual understanding between the Philippines and Japan," he said.

As guests took pictures of the colorful dolls, Eunice Ryuma, a Japanese woman clad in a Cordillera-inspired kimono, served green tea, entertained students from different schools and explained to them why parents and grandparents in Japan gifted Hina dolls to their young girls.

Tayama, who studies English here, showed to teachers how to wear kimonos with the help of a JANI members. "We can't wear kimonos alone. It's very difficult. We always ask for assistance," she said.

At the Iwate Hokusai Learning Center here, the traditional dolls, that were brought almost 30 years ago, were arranged on a seven-tiered stand covered with a red carpet called dodaisho or mosaic in Japanese.

Sitting on the top platform were the emperor and empress.

The next step kept three court ladies (sannin kanjo), followed by five musicians (gonin-bayashi), two secretaries (sadaijin and udaijin), sentinels and guards, each with a sword or guards, each, items within the palace and chess such as a king chest for kimono storage, sewing kit box and utensils for tea ceremonies, and several household utensils used when hosting the palace such as small mortar dishes.

"Sechiura and origami are favorites to tourists in the world but Japan's annual celebration for young girls and boys are unknown in Philippine people yet," Ogoni said.

He said they will display the dolls in Baguio. Mt. Province Museum here as part of the Baguio centennial celebration, Isabel Cruz, Inquirer Northern Luzon

A DOLL of an imperial warrior.

HOMETOWN Snapshots

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'Paraw': More than just an Ilonggo sailboat

By Vanessa B. Hidalgo
Iloilo City

FISHERMAN JESUS Pinchanco Sr. and his crew were racing the *paraw* in the Iloilo Strait toward Bandolan Point when tragedy suddenly struck. The wind and waves became rough, toppling the native boat's mast and flipping it to its side.

Fortunately, a motorized boat with journalists on board was around to pluck the four crewmen out of the waters. The *paraw* was later put up and towed to safety with Pinchanco staying to guide it.

Luck refused to abandon Pinchanco that day of Feb. 22, 59-year boat, 2 Angels, was now 71 participants in the 23.8-kilometer Paraw Regatta Sailboat Race from Sto. Niño Sur Seawalk to Iloilo City to Bacolod.

The city holds the Paraw Regatta festival yearly to recognize the creativity of the Ilonggo people in paraw-building. "We have been doing this for the last 27 years. It has been like a community activity already," said Sibalo Tourism, regional director of the Department of Tourism.

Since the Spanish times, paraw-building has been a tradition for the Ilonggo people, known to be shipbuilders and seafarers. They have used the boat not only as a means of transportation but also as a source of livelihood.

Distinct character

Pinchanco, 61, has joined the Paraw Regatta since 1973. His father taught him how to build the boat when he was a child—a craft that the fisherman eventually perfected by creating the double outrigger boats.

The paraw is built from a curved footboard or a long beam of wood connected to the floor of the boat with plywood planking for the sides. The hull is pointed at both fores and hindfoots.

Measuring 21 m long and 30 cm high, the boat's distinct feature is its slim hull with a length-to-beam ratio of 20 to 1. To stabilize the vessel, it is fitted with outriggers (bamo made of bamboo).

Its sails are originally made from woven matting, but nowadays, they are stitched up from synthetic sewing materials. The forward sail or sipoy knows the natural as fast as 20 to 30 nautical miles per hour.

Like Pinchanco, Conor Engallado believes that boat-building has been in his family blood. "My father was the one who actually made the paraw and he just taught me how," Engallado said in Filipino.

A veteran regatta participant, Engallado loves to gaze at his most prized possession as it gently sways to the rhythm of the sound. He resolved to spend P350,000 to build the boat. "We buy the materials one piece at a time," he said.

Among the cues has become a lifelong hobby for him. He started participating when he was 5 years old.

For Pinchanco, the paraw is not only a sport but also a means to feed his family of 12. During off-season, he uses a smaller boat to catch fish.

"Sometimes, we catch eight kilos of fish, but at times, we only have two kilos," he said. He earns a meager amount of P200 to P800 per catch, but has managed to send his children to college.

The paraw also helps ease the burden of day-to-day life, Engallado said. "It helps us forget our problems in life especially when we win."

He had earlier worked as a checker in a brokerage firm in Pulupandan City, but when the firm closed due to financial difficulties, he decided to return to Iloilo and build the paraw instead.

Today, Engallado, 42, also runs fishing and baking in a bread shop in Guimaras so he could continue keeping his boat. "This has been a tradition for us. The paraw is already a part of our lives," he said.

Pinchanco, like Pinchanco officials the paraw to ease the isolated ones. "The paraw is theirs," he said.

Wind power

The sailboat is considered economical and environmentally friendly since it only needs the wind to propel it—for all, Sibalo is where two winds converge.

With the theme, "Sailing the High Seas, Mooring for More," the Paraw Regatta Sailboat Race was the highlight of the four-day festivities in the city. The winning boat received P14,000 in cash.

Other than the money, Rene Cuchan, tourist operational officer, said "others joined because they enjoyed it and they really wanted to support Iloilo."

Last year's race attracted 40,749 tourist visitors, mostly Koreans.

For Pinchanco and Engallado, the paraw is not only a boat but a symbol of a rich heritage of craftsmanship and ingenuity.

THE 37TH Iloilo Paraw Regatta holds title. It has a record number of 71 entries.

'Hidden paradise' in Cebu mountain lures visitors

By Nicanor Labra
Cebu City

A MOUNTAIN RESORT IN SOUTHWESTERN Cebu is fast becoming a destination of tourists looking for a place far from the hassles of city life.

The P10-million Hidden Valley Resort Spa on a 12-hectare hillside property is an excluded city in Barangay Lanao, Moeseguijon town. The "hidden paradise" provides visitors with fresh air and tranquility—a place close to Nature—and is a favorite venue for retreats, meetings, conferences, reunions, outings and even honeymoons.

While many rooms are situated by the cafe, Hidden Valley is owned and managed by the Lanao Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LMPC).

The resort and the amenities that the official now enjoy were nonexistent 40 years ago.

"In the 1970s, Lanao had no road, no electricity, no potable water supply but it was already a community [of] farmers," recalled Dina Heras-Gravoso, LMPC general manager.

Change came slowly to the remote village. In 1979, some 70 tenants and small farm owners led by then barangay chair Narcisa P. De Grain formed a farmhand Nayon (a Moeseguijon village group) with an initial capital of P7,750. They immediately established a consumers' cooperative, the forerunner of the LMPC.

Lanao manifested itself through the hard work, sacrifice, commitment and faith in God of members of the LMPC. Lanao was cited during a "Leaders of Change Forum" of the First ASEAN Triennial Awards Summit held on March 4 at the Sarmiento Resort Center in Cebu City.

The cooperative was one of the award processors during the summit. In 2008, it received the first Icharado Abadia Award for Outstanding Initiatives.

Lanao said the farmers first worked on agrarian issues in helping build a road that would link their village to the outside world where they could sell their products and avail themselves of medicines and other basic needs.

Lanao, a one-lane side from Cebu City has a population of 5,000. It has a church, health center, elementary and secondary schools, post office, baking water system and drugstore.

Now, it is also easily reached through a concrete road from the town center and a gravel road from Barangay Lanayan in Toledo City.

The LMPC grew, acquiring office equipment, a truck, a rice mill and other assets. It later bought land, including a P7.3-million lot in Cebu City, and erected a building and a training center for cooperative members, Lanao said.

Lanao declared that the cash prizes that the LMPC won with its awards were used to buy office and farm equipment, and land, as well as construct buildings.

The cooperative also bagged awards in Gawad Pitak, Tulong sa Tao, Gawad Silap, Model Award, Kabuhayan Award, Ulirang Kooperatiba Award, and Outstanding Cooperative Multipurpose Partnership Award. Its prizes ranged from P10,000 to P1 million.

Its Hidden Valley Resort can accommodate up to 600 guests at a time. Day visitors include businessmen, school officials and students, buildingmates and their families, and foreigners.

Last year, more than 100 Koreans stayed for 45 days.

The resort offers air-conditioned single and double rooms, 23 big rooms for six persons each, and dormitory-type rooms. Guests can also stay in native huts or in semi-concrete buildings.

Aside from the beautiful landscape, it has a lagoon where guests can go rafting and fishing, two adult pools and two kiddie pools, function halls, restaurant and an amphitheater.

The more adventurous visitors can explore the resort's caves.

The LMPC is also engaged in agricultural modernization, reforestation, youth development, environment protection, product marketing and promotion, and housing and cooperative services.

Lanaoan said some members were engaged in swine and goat raising, vermiculture, bingan production, dairy farm and organic farming, as well as recycling and managing of a 48-hectare watershed.

The LMPC now has nearly 44,000 regular, associate and youth members, and total assets of P427.8 million. It has 14 offices operating in different places in Cebu.

"God has been kind to us," Lanaoan said.

THE LAGOON at the Hidden Valley Resort allows guests to go fishing or rafting.

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Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulandey

150 guards secure mall vs takeover

Tension still high amid fears city gov't plans to use force

By Beverly T. Mamaclay

TENSION REMAINS HIGH AT THE DISPUTED EVER GOTESCO Grand Central Mall as the mall management installed about 150 guards to prevent any impending takeover by the city government of the mall property in Monumento, Caloocan City.

STILL owners, sales clerks and shoppers stay outside the Grand Central shopping mall on Friday, waiting for the establishment to open.

It was business as usual at the mall as shoppers continued to flock the various malls in spite of tighter security as guards block the mall façade along Monumento.

Lawyer Trixie Angeles, spokesperson for the Ever Gotesco Group, told Inquirer that they have received information that the city government is planning a forceful takeover of the mall and has deployed members of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) police in the area to carry this out.

"We have deployed 100 guards plus 50 more on standby. This is a crisis situation as we have to take every legal action to protect our right against any illegal takeover," said Angeles.

She added that based on the information they got, the city is also gathering people from the barangays and are assembling them at the Victory Mall in front of the Grand Central Mall to make it appear as a takeover.

According to Angeles, the Ever Gotesco Group has also sought the help of the Northern Police District to help in the peace and order situation.

Jorge "Bilmore" Simeon, Caloocan police chief, said in an interview that about 50 policemen from the Regional Mobile Group were deployed in the Monumento area to maintain peace in the area.

He said the Caloocan city government has also requested police contingents to station some in the area but had asked that the police personnel commanders be assigned from the regional command so as not to give an impression of partiality to the city government.

Angeles said lawyers of the Ever Gotesco Group are currently preparing lawsuits against the city government for their "continuous harassment" of the company and their mall tenants.

Angeles said she and Atty. Rupert Unerman are also preparing contempt charges against Caloocan City officials for ignoring and disregarding the injunction issued by the Manila RTC in December 2008, which stopped Caloocan officials from initiating moves for a takeover of the mall.

Gov't launches new helpline

By DJ Yap

A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HELPLINE WILL soon provide assistance to Filipinos across the globe who are in need of it, from entertaining inquiries about where to apply for a marriage certificate to addressing technical concerns by taxpayers.

Unlike Dial 117, which provides emergency assistance to fires, crimes and other life-threatening situations, the new helpline to be spearheaded by the Civil Service Commission will accept calls involving non-life-threatening matters that are "just as important."

"Today we shall bridge the gap between government and the people," said CSC chair Ricardo Saludo at the launch of the project at Edsa Shangri-La in Mandaluyong City on Wednesday.

"The idea is to reduce red tape, and to give citizens immediate access to government agencies whenever they have a concern," said Angelo Timoteo de Rivera of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology and director general of the National Computer Center.

For the initial phase of the P68-million project, some 50 call center agents will entertain callers and connect them to the concerned agency through voice-over internet protocol technology, De Rivera said.

Callers' requests are noted upon by the agent or their calls are directed to the appropriate frontline service agency which then attends to the caller's request, he added.

Cops suspect a disgruntled customer may be behind QC car tire shop blast

By Julie M. Aurelio

POLICE ARE NOW GATHERING information to help them identify a disgruntled customer who could have been behind a grenade explosion at a Quezon City car tire shop on Thursday night.

The explosion tore through the Mr. Miller Bridgestone Tire Dealer along West Avenue near Edsa and wounded seven people and damaged several cars parked near the shop.

A disgruntled customer who was insistent on having his money back for his car's tire mags allegedly threatened to blow up the Mr. Miller Bridgestone Tire Dealer before Thursday's blast.

A mechanic of the car shop, who declined to be identified, said a man had visited their shop on Sunday morning and brought tire mags for his car.

"But on Sunday afternoon, he came back and said he wanted his money back, that he would return the mags. Our staff told him that it wasn't possible and that we will just replace the mags," the mechanic said that he knows on Thursday evening.

Apparently irked, the man allegedly shouted expletives at the staff and said, "Baka gusto niyong pasabugan ko itong tindahan ninyo? (Do you want me to blow up this shop?)"

Sr. Insp. Roberto Razon of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit said they would ask the shop for the records so to whom the mystery man might be.

"Right now, we are also considering that motive," he said in an interview outside the Capital Medical Center in Quezon City.

CIDU head Supt. Franklin Mateo Mabazza said they would also try to trace the mystery man's identity once they get the plate number of the vehicle the man brought to the car shop.

Razon also broached the possibility that three customers from Pampanga who were livid in the blast may have been the targets of the attack.

Case investigator PO1 Lorenzo Tigno identified the victims as Angel Mallari, 32; Leo Cordova, 29; Joel Ramos, 25; Berlin Martin, 42; Rico Gamboa, 20; Alden Quiroz, 30; and Antonio Macapagal. All are undergoing treatment at the Capital Medical Center.

3 vehicles damaged

Three vehicles were also damaged in the evening blast—a green Honda Civic (WPU 833), a white Isuzu Fargo (CSG-374) and a van (TWW 208) driven by a certain Fernando Ingal.

Tigno said Mallari, Gamboa and Quiroz were from Pampanga and were paying a visit at the shop when they suddenly noticed a motorcycle lobbed a grenade at the store.

Leonpito Isaac, a customer relations officer of the hospital, said Macapagal is currently undergoing surgery at the operating room. the injuries sustained in his abdomen.

Meanwhile, Cordova is being treated for injuries in the throat and doctors are still checking for any damages to his esophagus.

"All of them suffered blast injuries. The others suffered wounds in the arms and feet," Isaac said, adding that the others are in stable condition.

LIGHTNING RALLY
Members of militant groups Anakbayan and League of Filipino Students throw red paint on a poster of the Visiting Forces Agreement during a lightning rally on Friday in front of the Supreme Court in Manila as part for the junking of the VFA.

QC dad withdraws signature from resolution on SM plan

By Julie M. Aurelio

QUEZON CITY COUNCILOR JESUS SOLAS-withdrew his signature from a proposed resolution seeking to allow SM Development Corp. to build a 31-story building near the La Vista subdivision.

In a public hearing yesterday afternoon, Solas agreed to withdraw his signature in the proposed affair hearing the opposition of La Vista and Loyola Grand Villas residents.

Solas and city councilor Victor Ferrer first filed the proposed resolution last month after receiving a letter from SM Development Corp. asking for the exemption.

Ferrer later took the floor and said he respected Solas's decision.

Councilor Jesse Hidalgo claimed that the city planning office has not yet received an application from SM Development Corp. seeking an official exemption, and that the zoning authorities had not yet issued a clearance.

But lawyer Epifanio Rosevilla Jr. representing SM said they had conducted an environmental impact assessment and a traffic study, adding that they already identified certain problems which would be addressed once the project is approved.

METROBRIEFS

1 hurt in flyover collision

A SPEEDING motorcycle collided with a sports utility vehicle on a flyover in Pasay City just before dawn yesterday, leaving its driver seriously injured, police said. Jojo Cortes, of Kaunlaran Village, Navotas City, sustained head and body injuries and was taken to San Juan de Dios Hospital, said PO3 Romeo Rodriguez, case investigator. But Rosario said the driver could have died if not for the helmet he was wearing. He said Cortes was traversing the southbound portion of the Roxas Boulevard-Taft Avenue flyover on his Honda motorcycle (DFI 7870) around 3:30 a.m. when he tried to pass a car in front of him. He said the driver apparently did not notice an oncoming Toyota RAV4 (XML 871) driven by David Arvin Nhing as his motorcycle rammed head-on into the SUV. "Because of the impact, Cortes was thrown from his motorcycle and landed on the front panel of the SUV," de Rosario said. He said they were still investigating the incident to determine if Nhing had any liability in the accident. Marlon Ramos

Potable water for BF Homes

AFTER nearly 25 years of severe water shortage, potable water finally flows in BF Homes Paranaque, known to be the largest subdivision in Asia, this statement. May Hall said it has connected more than 500 households in the subdivision, which is composed of over 10,000 households. This development comes after the completion of several pipe-laying projects last January upon the request of the homeowners in seven out of the 25 enclaves in the subdivision. These include Tivoli, AERA, BF Central, Whitegate, Talisa (Tondero-Evangelista Homeowners Association), Ilgalor and NSB (Vinzons, Mandiri and Bandau streets.)

Raffle for a cause set today

THE ASSOCIATION of Private Markets and Slaughterhouse Operators of Quezon City will hold a raffle today at the Mega G-Mall Markethouse Rooftop on Edsa corner Elmer Garcia Street, Cubao, Quezon City at 2 p.m. Comelec de Guzman, the association president and operations manager of Mayfair Estate Company, said proceeds of the affair will go to orphanages and children in conflict with the law. Prizes at stake include a tricycle, a personal computer set, a refrigerator, a gas range, Mag-a-long, a color TV, a washing machine, a cell phone, and a computer scan. For more information, call 501-7-4704884.

The issues against Judge Angeles

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

CALOOCAN CITY REGIONAL TRIAL Court Judge Iskwarion G. Angeles has reacted to the item in this space questioning the approval by the Judicial Bar Council (JBC) of a recommendation for her appointment to the Court of Appeals.

Here's Judge Angeles' letter in full and my comments in some of the points she raised and she wordwise used:

"Dear Mr. Tulfo:

"In your column 'On Target' Page A/B, March 5, 2009 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer you recklessly faulted the (honorable JBC (Honorable)? Your (Sic) item, *you've just self-negating the JBC by selling it honorable. Why should a body that recklessly appoints justices and judges without investigating their backgrounds be called 'honorable'?*—RT) for nominating the undersigned to the Court of Appeals (Sic) *Gerard Jose (Sic) has had been convicted of child abuse* by the RTC of Quezon City and that she has three pending dishonesty cases.

"For your enlightenment, the Decision of the lower court is deemed vacated since the same is brought on appeal (Sic). *She has, but the fact remains that you were convicted by the lower court nevertheless*—RT). I doubt it very much whether you are unaware (you mean 'aware,' *Your Honor?*—RT) that the DECISION which you referred to in your column has been completely demolished and reversed by the HONORABLE COURT OF APPEALS (*Now, what's 'honorable' about the Court of Appeals, most of whose members are allegedly corrupt or incompetent?*—RT), for almost a year now, specifically on June 9, 2008. (*The decision, I learned from a Court of Appeals insider, dealt not with your alleged maltreatment of your two maids, but on a technicality, that the annoying proof of annulment of the accused may not have been true.' That's why the lower court's decision was reversed.*—RT)

"Did you ever go to the Court of Appeals personally to secure a copy of the DECISION, but you did not even bother to publish the same when the Judgment noted our to be favorable to the undersigned? Likewise, to prevent the misconception that may have been created in the minds of the readers, there is a need for me to say that there is now a pending disbarment against the undersigned.

(Do be right, Judge. I stand corrected that there is a disbarment case pending against you now, but administrative cases were filed against you for which decisions were made namely:

1. *AC-2333—for violation of Supreme Court circular, canons of judicial ethics and code of conduct. Misconduct, Grossness, Unprofessional. Result: The cases was terminated.*
2. *06-754—for conduct unbecoming of a judge, abuse of authority and oppression. Vitaris, Mildred, complainant.*
3. *04-1189—for gross misconduct and knowingly rendering an unjust decision. Result: The cases was terminated.*
4. *AC-1908—for violation of R.A. 3019, Misconduct, Grossness, complainant. Result: The case was recommended.*
5. *99-1467—for abuse of judicial functions. Pagalilan, Samuel, complainant. Result: The cases was terminated.)*

Also, Your Honor, you have a pending criminal complaint of child abuse before the Department of Justice where the complainant is Maria Mercedes Heras, your niece.

As for your claim that you've never had any disbarment case, Supreme Court resolution 02-8-02 says that administrative cases against Justices of the Court of Appeals and Sandiganbayan, judges of lower courts, officials who are lawyers take on the form of disbarment proceedings. (You had the decided administrative cases in the Supreme Court—RT).

Obviously, the "honorable" members of the Judicial and Bar Council did not do their homework when they promoted Judge Angeles to the Court of Appeals.

300 rookie cops beef up NCRPO

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION POLICE Office (NCRPO) yesterday hosted up in forces with the deployment of 300 rookie policemen to help maintain peace and order throughout Metro Manila.

Supt. Rommel Mirquez, NCRPO spokesperson, said the police officers had just completed their six-month Basic Recruit Course and another six months of Field Training Program.

He said the newest batch of policemen will be sent equally in the five police districts in Manila, Quezon City, Northern, Eastern and Southern Police Districts.

With the deployment of the rookie cops, he said the 14,000-strong NCRPO improved its police-population ratio to 1:795, but still far from the ideal 1:500. Marlon Ramos

HPD ANNUAL RECOGNITION NIGHT
Dr. Jaime G. Dy, chair of the Board and President of the Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association, Inc., which runs and operates the Chinese General Hospital and Medical Center in joint effort with the Filipino-Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, Inc., held awarding ceremonies recently with Manila Police District personnel for undertaking selfless service to the community. Under the leadership of HPD District Director General Roberto L. Rosales, plaque of recognition and cash awards were given to five police officers who were killed or wounded in action in line of duty for the year 2008, namely: SPO4 Antonio Baguiro, SPO2 Joel B. Vergara, PO2 Jack Miguro, SPO1 Jose Nonoel B. Santos and PO2 Francisco Mel. Dy is also Emeritus President of FCGCCI.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quirico

Anna Nicole Smith (right), with her attorney Howard K. Stern in photo taken on Oct. 2, 2008. AP

Warming worst-case scenarios being realized, scientists warn

COPENHAGEN—GLOBAL warming is accelerating beyond the worst predictions and is threatening to trigger "irreversible" climatic shifts in the planet, hundreds of leading scientists said.

Saying there is no excuse for inaction, the newly 2,000-strong conference meeting in Copenhagen urged policymakers to "vigorously" implement the economic and technological tools available to cut emissions of fossil fuels causing greenhouse gases.

The prestigious Nobel peace prize-winning panel's most recent report Thursday at the end of a three-day conference aimed at updating the findings of a 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change before 2014 talks in Denmark on a new global climate treaty.

"The worst-case IPCC scenarios (projections or even worse) are being realized," the scientists said in a statement. "There is a significant risk that many of the trends will accelerate, leading to an increasing risk of abrupt or irreversible climatic shifts."

The climate change panel predicted a sea level rise of 18 to 59 centimeters (7 to 23 inches) by the end of the century, which would flood low-lying areas and force millions to flee. But more recent research presented at the conference suggested that melting glaciers and ice sheets would help push that sea level up at least 50 centimeters (20 inches), and possibly as much as 1 meter (39 inches).

Recent observations show that emissions are highly vulnerable to even modest levels of climatic change with poor nations and communities particularly at risk," they said.

They noted that policymakers already have a range of tools to mitigate global warming. "But time is not on our side. Delay in vigorously and widely implementing to achieve the societal transformation required to decarbonize economies."

The conclusions of the congress will be presented to politicians when they meet in Copenhagen in December to discuss a new global agreement on greenhouse gas emissions to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

"We know from scientific evidence that climate change is a reality and that climate change will have damaging effects on the economy all over the world," said Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

Earlier Thursday, British economist Nicholas Stern, the author of a major British government report detailing the cost of climate change, told the conference that the global recession presents an opportunity to build a more energy-efficient economy.

"Coming out of this we have got to lay the foundations for a low-carbon growth, which is going to be like the railways, like the electricity, like the internet, so this is going to be one the next two, that's decades the big driver in investment," Stern said.

Stern said green investments make sense because energy-efficient economies will be more sustainable in the future. AP

Stern, doctors charged with giving drugs to Smith

LOS ANGELES—ANNA NICOLE Smith's boyfriend Howard K. Stern and two doctors have been charged with giving thousands of prescription drugs to the former Playboy Playmate in the years leading up to her fatal drug overdose in 2007.

Stern and doctors Sandeep Kapoor and Khristine Eroshevich on Thursday were each charged with three felony counts of conspiracy and several other charges of fraudulent prescriptions. Prosecutors said the doctors gave the drugs—including opiates and sedatives—to Stern, who then gave them to Smith.

The prescriptions were issued between June 2004 and January 2007, just weeks before Smith's death.

"These individuals repeatedly and excessively furnished thousands of prescription pills to an Anna Nicole Smith, often for no legitimate medical purpose," California Attorney General Jerry Brown said in a statement.

Brown's spokesman, Scott Hudson, told The Associated Press that Stern and Kapoor surrendered Thursday night and posted $20,000 bond, and that Eroshevich will surrender Monday. An arraignment date was not set.

The medical examiner's office has said Eroshevich, a Los Angeles psychiatrist and friend of the model's, authorized all the prescription medications found in the Hollywood, Florida, hotel room where the 39-year-old Smith was found unresponsive shortly before her death in Feb. 8, 2007.

Eroshevich's attorney, Adam Braun, acknowledged his client wrote some of the prescriptions using fictitious names for Smith, but said that the latter wasn't to commit fraud.

"It was done for primary reasons," Braun told the AP. "She did the best she could under difficult circumstances in the best interest of the patient."

Braun said Eroshevich began treating Smith following the death of the playmate's son in September 2006. The doctor treated on several occasions over a six-month period to the Bahamas where Smith was living with Stern and wrote the prescriptions.

The criminal complaint also alleges Kapoor wrote prescriptions for Smith under a pseudonym Michelle Chase. AP

US household wealth falls by trillions

IN THE LAST FOUR MONTHS, MOST AMERICANS have felt poorer. Now they have the numbers to prove it.

The Federal Reserve reported Thursday that households lost $5.1 trillion, or 9 percent, of their wealth in the three months of 2008, the most ever lost in a single quarter in the 57-year history of recordkeeping by the central bank. For the full year, household wealth dropped $11.1 trillion, or about 18 percent. Though the numbers do not yet reflect it, the decline in the stock market so far this year has probably erased trillions more in the country's collective net worth.

The next biggest annual decline in wealth came in 2002, when household net worth fell 4 percent after the collapse of the technology bubble. The most recent loss of wealth is crippling and will likely put further pressure on the economy because many people will have to spend less and save more.

Most of the wealth was lost in the holdings of homeowners like Ocalan, which plunged at the end of last year. The Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller index, for instance, fell 22 percent in the fourth quarter. The value of residential real estate, which is the biggest asset for most families, fell much less by comparison—$670 billion, or about 1 percent.

Even the richest among us have become a lot poorer. This week, Forbes magazine published its list of the richest people in the world. At No. 1, Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, still had $40 billion in his name, but that was down $18 billion. The wealth of Warren E. Buffett, the legendary investor whose company Berkshire Hathaway had a rare bad year, tumbled $25 billion, to $47 billion.

The loss of wealth is concentrated among the more affluent Americans, in large part because they own more stocks and bonds than the rest of the country. Only about 50 percent of households own stock, and many of those own relatively small sums in retirement accounts.

As a result of their greater wealth and higher incomes, the affluent tend to spend a lot more than their share of the population would imply. The top 20 percent of income earners spend more than the bottom 60 percent of income earners, according to calculations by Julian Lerdovich, the chief US equity strategist at Citigroup.

"When their wealth is eroded, they are not particularly interested in spending," Lerdovich said. NYT

WORLD BRIEFS

German shooter announced intention on Internet

WINNENDEN, GERMANY—A teenager who went on a rampage in his old school announced his intentions on the Internet just hours before, an official said Thursday, but police said should not Germans to control the 15 people he gunned down. "I have weapons here and tomorrow morning I will go to my old school and really whip up a storm," Tim Kretschmer, 17, said in a chat room, according to the Interior Ministry of the state where Wednesday's massacre took place. "I have had enough of this crummy life...Always the same. People are laughing at me, no one recognizes my potential. You will hear about me tomorrow! Make note of the name of the place: Winnenden," the posting said. AFP

Pope admits online news can provide aid

VATICAN CITY—The letter released Thursday in which Pope Benedict XVI admitted that the Holocaust "made victims" is troubling the curia of a Holocaust-denying bishop was unprecedented in its directness, its humanity and its acknowledgment of papal fallibility. But it also contained two sentences unique in the annals of church history. "I have been told that something like what is available on the Internet would have made it possible to perceive the problem early on," Benedict wrote. "I have learned the lesson that in the future in the Holy See we will have to pay greater attention to that source of news," in other words "Bride to the Pontiff Gone by Google." The Vatican, a 2,000-year-old monarchy based on the ruins of the Roman Empire and run by octogenarian men, has effectively stayed the demands of the 24-hour news cycle. In the clear weight because letter, Benedict acknowledged the "turbulence of protests" stirred after he revoked the excommunication of four schismatic bishops in January, including Richard Williamson, who in a television interview broadcast a few days earlier—and widely available online—had denied the existence of the Nazi gas chambers. WTT

Liechtenstein, Andorra to ease bank secrecy rules

PARIS—Two small European countries, Andorra and Liechtenstein, agreed to loosen banking secrecy rules on Thursday, a small but timely retreat cited by Western governments trying to steer down tax havens. The agreements are a victory for France, Germany and the United States, which say revenue services have been seeking to claim potentially billions of dollars and euros in unpaid taxes on money stashed by their citizens in offshore bank accounts. Liechtenstein and Andorra, along with Monaco, had been on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's list of uncooperative tax havens since 2000. AFP

G-GIG SAKUI-FILE

Apple Inc. has unveiled the third-generation iPod nano, a slim aluminum rectangle barely 2 inches long even as it doubles music storage space on 4 gigabytes which holds about 1,000 songs. AP

Coffee Time, Anytime, at SM

Something's brewing at The Block.

Everybody loves coffee. From sunrise to sunset, people can't get enough of this golden, aromatic brew. Coffee is there at the start of the day at work, with clients during an afternoon meeting, all the way after work with friends. Indeed, coffee is more than a drink, it's a way of life.

That's why this March, SM North EDSA – The Block celebrates our love for coffee in the grandest way. Cafestival is a 2-month fete for all things coffee. The best brews from all over the world, expert baristas from all over the country, books and art inspired by the brew – they're all here, all this March.

A Taste of Paris.

The Atrium of The Block will be transformed into a Parisian sidewalk during the festival. Our premier coffee shops are setting up quaint sidewalk cafes for your drinking pleasure. Go people watching while you sit back, relax and enjoy a cup – just like the French do. It's a European experience, and it all happens up north.

Browse with Brews.

What goes great with coffee? Good books. That's why at the Cafestival, you'll get your fill of both. We're hosting a Book Fair during the festival and you're sure to find different books that you'd love to browse or bring home: Coffee table books, novels, comics – there're all here. It's another reason to come over and celebrate the festival.

The Art of Coffee.

Coffee making is an art, so drop by our Art Exhibit and marvel at the paintings and photos that were inspired by coffee. These exhibits make coffee not just good to drink, but great viewing as well.

Hot Coffee. Cool Sounds.

Chill out and relax as different bands give a distinct flavor and sound to the Cafestival. Get ready to kick off the festival with performances from La Escala de Sandra Maeda Guarana, Eileen Sison, and Acoustic Jive. Then, get a taste of jazz, swing and big band as the Bombol Rockers perform a 2-night concert. Next on the list is Acoustic Escapade – the group that helps you unwind with Soul and Brasstown music. And get ready to lift your spirits with the Bruss Muskeys – one of the foremost names in big band jazz.

Three different bands, three more reasons to come back to the Cafestival again and again.

The Brew That's Good For You.

Coffee lovers, rejoice! Not only does your favorite brew wake you up and keep your energy high the entire day. A cup a day makes your mind alert, helps enhance your memory, and even helps delay the signs of aging. That's a lot more reasons to drink coffee and keep on coming back to the festival.

Get your fix at The Block.

March 14
4:00 pm ..... La Escala de Sandra Maeda Guarana & Eileen Sison
6:30 pm ..... Acoustic Jive

March 14 – 27
10:00 am ..... Coffee Art: Photo and Painting Exhibit; Book Fair

March 15 – 16
4:00 pm ..... Bombol Rockers

March 21
4:00 pm ..... Acoustic Escapade

March 22
4:00 pm ..... Bruss Muskeys

Follow the irresistible scent of coffee and come over to The Block. Get your fix of great coffee, excellent music, eye-catching art and fantastic books – all in one unforgettable festival. Catch the Cafestival from March 14 to 27, only at SM North EDSA – The Block.

The new SM city north edsa

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Johnson sizzles again for SLR

Realtors import's swashbuckling offense overwhelms Barako Bull

By Marvey R. Castillo

THERE'S A NEW YARDSTICK among the imports and he's made Sta. Lucia a truly hot team.

Anthony Johnson set league career highs in points and rebounds and led the Realtors to their third straight win, a 108-91 humbling of Barako Bull last night to gain solo second place in the Metrobank-PBA 33rd Philippine Cup eliminations at the Araneta Coliseum.

The deadly high-leaper soared 29 of his conference-high 43 points in the third canto prelude to go with 21 boards as the Realtors broke away in the third quarter to improve to 3-1 while handing the Energy Boosters their third loss to four games.

"He's really good and I am very happy that he is playing for us," Sta. Lucia coach Jimpet Fernandez said of his import, who continued to improve every game and has taken the Realtors along for the ride.

Jun Miguel Beer and Patrobondo were still playing in press time.

Johnson's scoring was tested by Senator

BARAKO Bull's Jeanz McFadgen (left) and Paolo Hubalde try to wiggle out of a defensive trap laid by Sta. Lucia's Dennis Miranda (back) and Joseph Yeo in last night's game.

McFadgen, Barako Bull's small but prolific reinforcement, who was silenced when it truly mattered. McFadgen still finished with 34 points but this time couldn't dominate inside.

Against Barangay Ginebra last Sunday, Johnson totally outplayed Red Healy in a duel between the best all-around imports in the tournament and unwanted an 88-79 victory for Sta. Lucia.

In that game, Johnson had 30 points and 12 rebounds, while Healy shot just 1-8 on top of 1-4 from the end line and five assists before fouling out and failing to help in the endgame.

Rolly Williams was another double-double performer for Sta. Lucia with 23 and 13 to go with five assists and Marlou Aquino continued to play "like a 25-year-old" according to Fernandez to finish with 10 and nine rebounds.

Barako Bull took a 32-44 halftime lead behind a 22-point effort by McFadgen.

But the Realtors buckled down to serious work and with Johnson anchoring the offense with 16 of his output, Sta. Lucia seized double-digit leads just as quick and went into the fourth with a 76-62 advantage.

McFadgen hit just four points in the third and couldn't help prevent the Sta. Lucia breakaway. Gabby Espinas and Paolo Hubalde were the others in twin digits for the Energy Boosters, who came into the game fresh from a 92-90 win over slumping Alaska.

All told, Johnson, whose previous career highs were 39 and 20 when he played for Coca-Cola in 2007, is now averaging 34 points and 17 rebounds a contest.

Meanwhile, reigning Philippine Cup champion Talk 'N Text shoots for a second straight win against Burger King today in a rematch game presented by Phoenix Fuel at the Fernando Sports Center in Mandaluyong at 4 p.m.

The scores:

STA. LUCIA 108 – Johnson 43, Williams 23, Aquino 10, Reyes 8, Espinas 6, Dionisio 6, Yeo 4, Sta-O 2, Cruzada 2, Gonzales 2, Miranda 2.

BARAKO BULL 91 – McFadgen 34, Espinas 11, Hubalde 11, Chavit Jardeleza, Sharma 8, Arboleda 4, Agustin 3, Cruzada 2, Vargas 2, Arana 2.

Quarters: 24-44; 44-62; 76-82; 108-91.

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Pacquiao-Hatton winner may face Mayweather next

By Francis TJ. Ochoa

EVEN IN RETIREMENT, THE ILLICITEST BOXER-PROVOKING MOVE BY Floyd Mayweather Jr. is enough to titillate fight journalists.

Pound-for-pound king Manny Pacquiao and junior welterweight ruler Ricky Hatton are banging themselves for what could be a contender for "Fight of the Year" honors but the retired Mayweather continues to cast a shadow on the May 2 bout by being penciled in as the next opponent of the winner of the Las Vegas Clash.

And all Mayweather had to do was hang off from any engagement to put his name in the runner's mill again.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported that Mayweather pulled out of a fund-raising event in Ohio, sparking rumors that he was preparing to make an announcement regarding his comeback.

Mayweather's spokesperson added fuel to the fire by saying the no-show would be explained by an announcement within the week.

Although its announcement was made, boxing.fanhouse.com reported that it had been receiving inside buzzing Mayweather could declare an end to his retirement by deciding to fight the winner of the May 2 Pacquiao-Hatton go.

Pacquiao is working on unleashing the right hand against Hatton, who hopes that he can make the Filipino stumblers with his pet left.

"He gambles with every punch," Pacquiao told USA Today. "He puts everything he's got into his left cross. If you can make him miss, he's very open and he's all balance. If he misses, he's going to have some big shots waiting for him."

Flyweight titlist Michael Mcaver is helping Pacquiao prepare for the British "Ali-man. Reports had it that Mike Tyson also assisted in help out the Pacman's camp.

Trainer Freddie Roach confirmed that Tyson had indeed approached him for a possible job as Wild Card but Pacquiao's trainer turned down Tyson's offer.

"Unfortunately Mike isn't doing too well at the moment," Roach told Sports.inquirer.com. "I just got a call that he wants a job. I just don't think he has the patience to be a trainer."

Meanwhile, Hatton insists Floyd Mayweather Sr. reiterated that the Mandaluyong superstar will be his first. Oscar De La Hoya who lost via an eighth-round TKO to Pacquiao on Dec. 6, last year.

Mayweather Sr. said Hatton has "a very good chance of knocking (Pacquiao) out. This ain't no dehydrated Oscar De La Hoya."

Gorres duels ex-world king Leyva in Cebu tonight

By Dennis Principe, Correspondent

CEBU CITY—ONE-TIME WORLD TITLE challenger J. Gorres appeared at home to the hometown-light division and plans to prove that in front of a boisterous crowd when he battles former world champion Roberto Leyva of Mexico tonight at the Waterfront Hotel.

Gorres was half-ignored over the 11th Bilimeter yesterday during the official weigh-in at the SM City Entertainment Center, but easily got off the uneven weight by weighing in a few minutes around the small's parking area.

"I was confident the weight will not be a problem because this morning I weighed in at 138.4," said Gorres after going back to the scales and weighed exactly 130.

Surprisingly, Leyva, a former world super-featherweight champion, was also a pound over the limit.

He apparently overdid himself in getting rid of the extra pound as he officially registered 126.3 after almost 20 minutes of jogging and skipping rope.

Gorres wants to use this fight to get a rematch with former nemesis Fernando Montiel of Mexico and Australia-based Armenian Vic Darchinyan.

Montiel beat Gorres via a controversial split decision in their world super flyweight clash two years ago while Darchinyan escaped with a 12-round draw against the Filipino lefty last year in a world super flyweight title elimination. Both fights were staged in Cebu.

Gorres has a fight record of 28(2.1 vanls 13 KOs, while the 29-year-old southpaw Leyva is 25-6-1 with 20 KOs.

SO GOMEZ

So, Gomez Battle of GMs top favorites

THE COUNTRY'S TWO HOTTEST YOUNG players today—GMs Wesley So and Jon Paul [illegible] Phoenix Petroleum-Sagittarius City "Battle of GMs" these championship scenes off the swaps at the Pavilion Hotel in Sagittarius City, Santamaria del Norte on March 29 to 31.

So, the country's highest-rated player with an Elo rating of 2627, is coming off an impressive campaign in Europe where he bagged the Group C title to the Corus tournament in Wijk aan Zee, the Netherlands, and the top junior [illegible] Bel-Aerodur Open in Moscow, Russia.

Gomez became the country's newest GM as her incredible 2008 World Chess Olympiad in Dresden, Germany.

But So and Gomez are expected to have their hands full against their older and more experienced rivals, [illegible] Rolando Tord and GM Rogelio Antonio Jr.

National Chess Federation of the Philippines president-Pampanga Pichay Sagittarius City Vice-Mayor Darel Chan, Phoenix Petroleum brand and marketing manager Jay Orillano and Lingayen secretary to the mayor Antonella Duggan attended the event's press launch at Linden Suites in Pasig City yesterday.

The men's champion will pocket P500,000 while the women's winner gets P80,000.

Uy eyes NCA derby repeat

PRIDE OFF HIS RECENT VICTORY, JAMES Uy will co-host the National Cockers Alliance (NCA) derby on March 17 at the Trianon Center in Pasig City.

Uy, who tried the March 10 leg of the derby series, will team up with Rhea Cantos, Ana and Rudy Angco and the Windbarge team members in staging the Eggspress Complicare-sponsored event on Tuesday.

Also the reigning NCA Multi-Champ-ionship champion, Uy beat Raul Bicaldo, who amassed 4.5 points.

Bicaldo almost became co-champion but drew with Tommy Chua and Danny dela Cruz.

Philip Chiongbian, Boy Torres, and Mario Co shared third with four points each.

The next NCA derby is slated on March 24 with hosts Rene Medina, Bic de Guzman, Mario Villamor and Bicaldo.

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UAAP DYNASTY

What makes Team UST tick

By Jasmine W. Payo

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS has remained unshakeable on top in the UAAP because of a simple formula.

UST shed the distinction of the country player as the key factor after formally receiving on Thursday the 71st UAAP overall championship during the league's Awards Night at the Delta ng Alumni at the University of the Philippines campus.

The Tigers prevailed for the 11th straight year while the Tiger Cubs went for the third consecutive season.

"It's not that we have a big budget and it's not that we're winning in the recruitment," Fr. Rolando de Seguia, UST's representative to the UAAP board, said after the Tigers accepts all the gold of arrows.

"It's a matter of fact, we lose many of our best athletes to the juniors because they're being actively recruited also. But I always believe that we don't need an excellent team athlete who doesn't want to play for UST.

"I'd rather go for ordinary athletes who really want to play for the university. It's different when we have people who really want to play for us."

Nine titles for 333 points

The Tigers, who highlighted their overall victory with nine titles, finished with 333 points to the varsity division's clinching their 21st overall crown in the last 22 years.

"We emphasize to our athletes that they're doing this for the university and for themselves," said Fr. Seguia. "And that should be the best incentive—they make a name for themselves."

It's the loyalty and the love of the athletes and coaches for the varsity that they handle that makes the Tigers successful," added 8th the 9 medals, UST's longtime UAAP representative.

The Tiger Cubs dominated their division with 89 points and shaved their 11th overall title in 14 years.

"Our retention is on all sports, that's why ... we have a balanced sports program," said Fr. Seguia. "I think some universities emphasize only on basketball or volleyball. We try to have our investments in all sports, both in the junior and senior divisions."

As much as possible we try to live long-range plan, such that when our base players for this year, there must be some replacement," added Fr. Seguia. "We're successful in most of our teams. We have good incentives."

Gomez athlete of the year

The years also honored Jo Salle's Jolen Ria Gomez, who bagged the Athlete of the Year plum in the senior division after winning several MB Most Valuable Player awards in their this season.

The 23-year-old Gomez, who led the Green Archers to the championship, also made serves on the national beach volleying as the country's stitch Grandmaster in the World Chess Olympiad last November in Dresden, Germany.

"Chess has really shaped the way I am right now," said Gomez, a mechanical engineering student ranked third in the country with an Elo of 2339, behind wife Woi-Wei Su and the veteran Eugene Torre.

Alyssa Valdez, a mid-senior 15-year-old volleyball player from UST, won the Junior Athlete of the Year plum.

Other students honored were the MVPs in all 13 sports, the top eight athlete scholars and the players who competed in international tournaments.

UAAP president DL Benjie Cuy of host DP also turned over the hosting chores to Sienna 72 president Aaron Montevirde of the Eastern University.

SEASON'S BEST Chess grandmaster John Paul Gomez of La Salle (second from left) and UST junior volleyball standout Alyssa Valdez receive their trophies from Dr. Benjie Cuy (left) of 71st season host UP and Ateneo Montevirde of FEU in Thursday's UAAP Awards Night. KISS JUSTO

Cojuangco to donate Luisita site for athletes

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER IN THE HEART OF HACIENDA Luisita in Tarlac.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. announced this idea recently after he turned down "no-income" part of the vast property owned by the Cojuangco family in Tarlac to serve as the site for NTC.

According to POC spokesman Joey Romasanta, the Cojuangco Group of Companies will give up for a 50-year lease some 50 hectares of land in Hacienda Luisita of P1 per year.

But they still have to identify the location of the planned NTC. The hacienda measures about 6,000 hectares.

Cojuangco, a first-time Tarlac congressman, hopes to build a world-class sports village complete with facilities that will serve as training and billeting center for athletes and as venue for major international sports events.

The POC head, who is in Kuwait for an Olympic Council of Asia meeting, is seeking an DOJ grant to build a national training center that will be patterned after the US Olympic Committee headquarters in Colorado Springs.

Under Cojuangco's proposal, the OCA will draw up the plan for the NTC with the International Olympic Committee picking up the bill for the site's construction.

Cojuangco announced plans last year to transfer the national athletes' center from the dilapidated Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Manila to Clark Field, Pampanga.

Clark was later ruled out as NTC site for unknown reasons.

About 1,000 members of the national pool train and may either at the RMSC, the Philsports complex in Pasig City or at the training camp in Baguio City.

Cojuangco said athletes must train away from crowded areas so they can focus well.

Phoenix golf unfolds at Palos Verdes

SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S STIFFEST duffs players are action today in the first Phoenix Open golf tournament at the Riviera Hills Country Golf and Country Club in Davao City.

The 36-hole tournament, part of the brew ng Dakan Industries and organized by Phoenix Petroleum Philippines, Inc., will use the Stroke Mcformat.

Some 200 golfers are expected to play in the event being held for the benefit of programs and charities supported by Phoenix Philippines Foundation, Inc. The foundation's programs focus on environment, education and assistance to disaster victims and the marginalized.

Pioneer Insurance has put up a P1 million prize for a hole-in-one in this year's event and in succeeding tournaments. The player who scores the ace will also drive home a new Foton pickup truck courtesy of Foton Motor Philippines and a one-year supply of Phoenix Petroleum fuel and lubricants products.

Prizes are also at stake for Match the OIO, nearest to the line, longest drive and nearest to the pin challenges. Closest-to-the-pin and runner-up will receive trophies.

UFC official gear out locally soon

ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP (UFC) is gaining legions of followers in the Philippines, thanks to the daring exploits of Brandon Vera in the international scene.

Born to a Filipino father and an American-Indian mother, the 31-year-old Vera fights as a light heavyweight like Mark Muñoz, another Filipino-American who is starting to make a name for himself in the mixed martial arts scene.

Filipino fans now have a chance to dress up like their favorite fighters after the UFC's local licensing agent, ABS-CBN Licensing, tied up recently with Sportsman Philippines Inc., creators of Accel, to manufacture official UFC gear for the country and the rest of Asia.

Products, including shorts, caps, hoodies, shorts and bags, will be on sale starting in June. Refrigerator stickers will be included in the packaging and hang tags of original items to assure customers that the official products passed the quality standards of UFC.

"We are very excited and happy with this partnership because now we will be able to cater to all Filipino fans of UFC via our merchandise," said Sportsman president and CEO Wilfredo Uriarte.

UFC programs are being aired by ABS-CBN cable sports channel Balls.

Bernardo S. Abarrientos

Cuba beats Mexico in WBC

MEXICO CITY—YULIESKI GOURRIEL, ARIEL PESTANO AND FREDDY CANNON CAPPS all homered to help Cuba rout Mexico, 15-4, in seven innings Thursday to secure first place in Group B at the World Baseball Classic. Pestano and Capps each hit three-run homers in a nine-run seventh inning to lead Cuba to a win by the mercy rule. AP

SPORTS

Sharapova returns, loses doubles match

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—MARIA SHARAPOVA MADE HER FIRST competitive appearance for seven months on Thursday, losing a doubles match on Thursday at the BNP Paribas Open. The former world's No. 1 teamed with Russian compatriot Elena Vesnina and they were beaten, 6-2, 4-6, 10-7, by Nadia Petrova and Tatiana Poutchek. AP

Lakers grab playoff slot

SAN ANTONIO—THE LOS ANGELES Lakers became the first team in the Western Conference to clinch a playoff berth on Thursday, the visitors knocking a trip to the post-season with a 131-95 win over the San Antonio Spurs.

Kobe Bryant and Pau Gasol each scored 23 points as the Lakers continue to run away with the conference race, the victory giving Los Angeles (53-13) an 8½ game lead over the second place Spurs.

"We were really determined to win this game," Bryant said. "In the fourth quarter they made their run, which was expected, but we did a good job. We had to get back to the basics and we did that."

Shannon Finley and Tony Parker had 23 points apiece for San Antonio which had its three-game winning streak snapped.

Bryant had a big part in downing clubhas become stage, and the league's reigning MVP made a clutch three-pointer to put the Lakers 96-93 ahead with 1:46 remaining after the Spurs had reclaimed an 11-point deficit to just two in the fourth quarter.

It was the Lakers' second impressive road victory in as many nights, having dumped the Houston Rockets 102-96 on Wednesday.

Lat. Angeles forward Lamar Odom was suspended for that game after leaving the bench during an altercation against Portland on Monday.

Though he still enjoyed Bryant's 27-point performance and cut-throat battle with Rockets guard Ron Artest.

"It was fun watching one of my childhood friends from and Kobe kind of go at it a bit," Odom said after recording 12 points and 10 boards on his return.

"Kobe's one of those players I really wouldn't want to get going. Ron knew what he was doing."

Trevor Ariza was inserted into the Lakers starting lineup in place of Luke Walton and scored 10 points, banking up coach Phil Jackson's decision to include the athletic 6-foot-8 forward from the opening tip-off as he provides a more defensive presence.

In Phoenix, Cleveland's LeBron James got his third consecutive triple-double and a long-sought first win in Phoenix, 139-111.

LEBRON James of the Cleveland Cavaliers tumbles to the floor after getting fouled against the Phoenix Suns. The Cavaliers won, 139-111. AP

James had 34 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds, and Cleveland won a road game against the Suns for the first time in a decade.

On the only NBA court to which he hadn't won, James was 0-5 here heading into the game. He completed his triple-double with a rebound with 2.0 seconds to play.

Mo Williams, who scored a career-high 44 the first time the teams met this season, added 30 for Cleveland, including 6-of-10 3-pointers.

Shaquille O'Neal and Steve Nash 20 as the Suns extended their losing streak to six games, their longest in six seasons.

Phoenix is six games behind Dallas in the race for the final playoff berth in the West. Reuters, AP

Woods six strokes down in Doral golf

DORAL, FLORIDA—TIGER WOODS isn't recall ever hitting the ball this long or having a short game this superb, and it showed when he chipped in three times on his way to a 7-under 65 for a share of the lead in the CA Championship on Thursday.

Tiger Woods had few complaints about his game, but he sure didn't get the same results.

In his first similar calendar event since winning the US Open last summer, Woods managed only three birdies on a Blue Monster course where he has never finished out of the top 18. He wound up with a 71 to tie for 40th in an 80-man field.

"It was not like I was playing poorly and shot 71," Woods said. "I played well and just didn't make any putts."

The problem for Tiger was just about everyone else did.

Jerry Mikhie Haigh ran off five birdies in a six-hole span around the turn and was the first player to post a 65 on a balmy, breezy afternoon. Retief Goosen, switching back to a conventional putter, ran off eight birdies in his round of 65. And the real surprise was Thepnal Manhaseng of Thailand, who birdied eight of his first 12 holes to join the leaders.

The group one shot back included British Open and PGA champion Padraig Harrington, who didn't feel as though he did much of anything right and had his best score of the year.

"I think I hit two fairways with my driver today. So it's not like I played good golf or anything like that," Harrington said.

Strong finish

For Mickelson, it was nearly about his finish.

He hit into the water on No. 3 and took double bogey, found the water again on the par-5 fourth hole and chipped in for par. Mickelson was even through eight holes and was hopeful of a good back nine that would allow him a chance on Friday to get into contention.

After saying to enter the 18th par-5 16th hole, he pitched up to 3 feet for birdie. Then he chipped in from short of the green on the 17th, and made a three-straight birdies by chipping in from about 25 feet on the 18th.

Woods didn't have many close looks at birdie, picking up two of them on par 5s and the other one with a 7-iron that stopped close from the hole on the par-3 13th hole.

"Today I was trying to figure it out, how to get the ball to the hole a little bit faster than what I was doing," Woods said. AP

Cotabato's award-winning Children of Peace fouled

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trimillos

* * *

THAT CHEEKY FRIMAR, HOMPEdroming, which was used by this expression to describe the tenure of Gov. Jesse Sinsuhiro, landed like a fool punch on remember supporters of the North Cotabato provincial executive.

It, in fact, displeased Dr. Sheila B. Magsalos, retired community development supervisor from Midsayap, Cotabato, who readily wrote me editor to set the record straight.

"Comprehending, yes, but that's as far as gall and corruption is concerned, and thank heavens for that!"

In December last year, recounted Dr. Magsalos, Gov. Sinsuhiro (whole-heartedly) approved an inter-NGO festival and dental mission to educating evacuees in five Magindanawan [illegible] municipals of Midsayap.

Dr. Magsalos said she visited Sinsuhiro following up on a solicitations for an Operation Smile medical-surgical mission to benefit a number of children from Cotabato with cleft lip and other facial deformities, and ironically got a personal cheque for the program from the good governor.

Then, Kiko, should help set the record straight.

Also to make up for that awkward description of how Sinsuhiro, this reporter asked around.

You know, to help bring out what other great achievements the governor has registered.

So what did I find?

There, indeed, were billboards and streamers around North Cotabato congratulating Gov. Sinsuhiro for receiving a Gawad Galing Pook award from Malacañang for the Children for Peace program.

* * *

You bet that made me doubly guilty for having maligned Sinsuhiro at a superficial.

Of course, I also recalled that the successful Children for Peace program in North Cotabato was started in 2003.

But, it was still my friend and former desk mate at Tempo, Manny Pillol, who was at the helm as governor of North Cotabato when the Children for Peace program was launched.

For the record, Children for Peace brought together bright Muslim, Christian and tribal high school students to an effort to make them understand each other's culture and religion.

Those children were sent to college as scholars so they could prepare to be cohesive leaders of Cotabato in the future.

Acknowledging its great potential, the United said the government of Saudi Arabia supported the program.

* * *

Anyway, this commendable program was cut short after Sinsuhiro stopped funding Children for Peace starting in 2007.

Still, being the incumbent governor, Sinsuhiro personally received the Gawad Galing Pook award at Malacañang.

There was nothing really wrong with that.

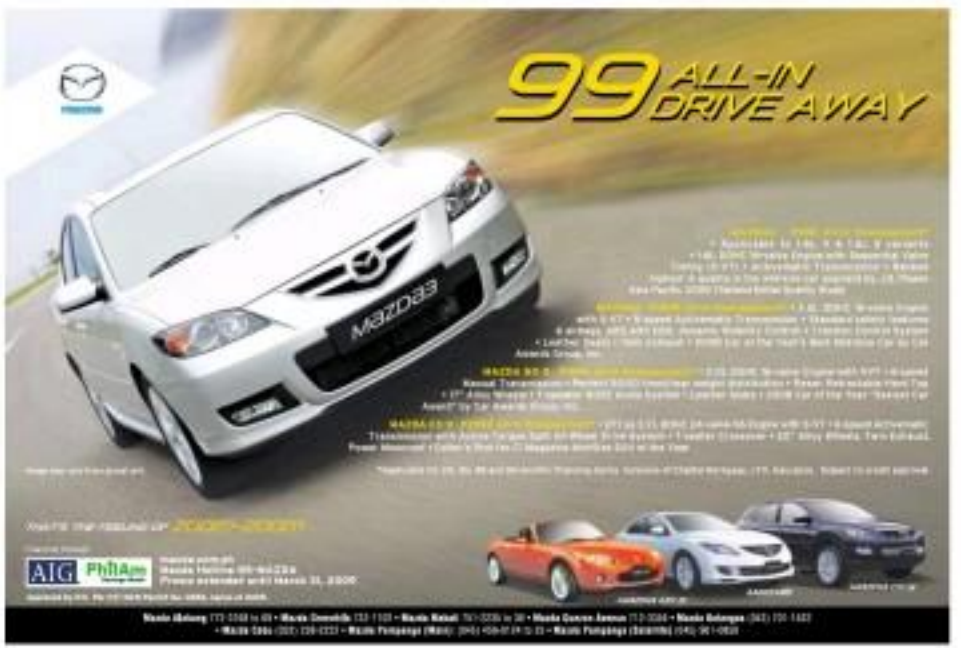
However, upon his return, Sinsuhiro asked his people to put up streamers and billboards congratulating himself as the singular winner of the award.

As was only proper, Children of Peace members wrote Gov. Sinsuhiro, who has since steadied all staffers assigned to Vice Gov. Pillol, to tell him he "was not a good example to children."

A later check found that Children for Peace was unique for the fact that it was Manny Pillol who designed and launched the program.

Children for Peace was, plain and simple, Pillol's intellectual property.

Unfortunately, losing Sinsuhiro, feeling infinitely powerful, saw nothing foul in owning the copyright from Pillol.



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Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

More 'hot money' left RP in February

Net inflow shrinks to $22.6M in first 2 months

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL DOWNTURN ON the Philippines manifested itself more clearly in February when "hot money" registered with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed a net outflow of $195.7 million, reversing the net inflow of $835.23 million posted in the same month last year.

The net outflow of foreign portfolio investments in February was also a reversal of the $222.35 million in net inflow recorded in January.

The BSP said the exit of "hot money" from the Philippines reflected the growing risk aversion that is badly affecting emerging economies in general. Although the country's economic fundamentals remained strong compared with those in advanced countries, the BSP said this was not enough to appease investors threatened by the global turmoil.

Investors believed that the impact of the pump-priming initiatives of the US government would not be immediate, the BSP added.

"Some investors are on the observation of the US economic stimulus package and concern over the continued weakening of major economies have increased risk aversion among investors causing a decline in inflows to emerging markets including the Philippines," Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco is said in a statement yesterday.

The February "hot money" data included $190.9 million worth of gross inflows and $395.6 million in gross outflows.

The inflow consisted of equity purchases in publicly listed companies ($144.5 million), investments in government securities ($31.6 million) and placements in peso-denominated deposits ($800,000).

The outflow included $84.4 million worth of outlish stock of investments in publicly listed companies, $6.3 million in divestment of government securities, rollover of $302.6 million worth of peso-bank deposits and the exit of $2.3 million worth of other types of investments.

"Hot money" data for February brought the cumulative figure for the first two months of the year to a net inflow of $22.65 million, a sharp drop from the net inflow of $2.2 billion in the same period last year.

Stocks close lower

Thrift banks vow to police own ranks

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE SALAMBAHIN CHAMBER OF Thrift Banks plans to police its own ranks as part of its thrust to promote "responsible" banking in the wake of the scandal over the crumbling Legaspi financial group.

"In response to the call of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for banks to maintain prudent banking practices in order to ensure bank stability and the protection of customer deposits, we have initiated a review of the membership rules and regulations to improve without of the code of conduct of our membership and tighten our membership standards," CTB president Ruel Garcia III said.

Garcia, who is also president of the country's second biggest thrift bank Philippine Savings Bank, urged member-banks to approve a proposal from the CTB board to amend the group's by-laws and code of conduct. The proposal was presented during the national convention of the association yesterday.

"We support the Bangko Sentral's call for responsible banking in the light of the mul-

BPI Family sees consumer lending growth of 10%

By Doris C. Dumlao

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK AIMS to grow its consumer lending this year by at least 10 percent, despite a looming global economic recession.

At the launch of BPI Family Bank's five nationwide "Auto Madness" program Thursday night, bank president Alfonso Salcedo said the bank believed there was money available among consumers and lenders in BPI Family would simply give the people a good deal.

He said BPI Family could expand its consumer lending—including the auto and housing loan portfolios—by 10 percent despite the slowdown in remittances from overseas Filipinos, a key driver of domestic demand over the years.

Tests market with car loan program

Salcedo said the bank's lending to the overseas Filipino segment accounted for 25 percent of the total portfolio. As such, he said a slowdown in remittance flows would likewise curb loan demand from the sector as what transpires since the last quarter of 2008.

"This [auto madness promo] will be a very good indicator if there's real money on the sidelines," Salcedo said, noting that car buyers should likewise be encouraged by the softening of fuel prices.

Salcedo said there was now a growing preference among car buyers to acquire cars with smaller engines such as the Toyota Vios, as well as those which are classified as Euro 4-compliant vehicles.

The "Auto Madness" promotion is a four-day event until Sunday where 16 car brands are promoted in 16 different shopping mall locations across the country. BPI Family always hold such programs each year but this is the first time it is doing it on a nationwide scale.

The program also promotes road safety and responsible driving.

"BPI Family Savings Bank does it part by making car purchases not only affordable but also hassle-free to our buyers all over the country," said bank senior vice president and head of auto loans Ravi Sunnawala.

Gotianun completes purchase of Philam Savings

REAL ESTATE TYCOON Andrew Gotianun has completed the $40.3-million acquisition of American International Group's (AIG) local consumer finance unit, bundled into AIG Philam Savings Bank.

East West Bank announced yesterday that the transaction, which was also recently approved by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), had been consummated. It had acquired all the shares of Philam Savings, Philam Asset Finance & Leasing Inc. and HG Holdings Inc.

"Completion of the acquisitions takes us another step closer to the merger of the two institutions," East West chairman Antonio Gotianun said, noting that the merger would take take a few months.

"In due time after the merger, new and personal loan borrowers and insurance customers/holders will be able to apply and make payments to any East West Bank or Philam Savings branches," he said.

Bank president Antonio Moncayo Jr. said there would be continuity of service and that it would be "business as usual" following the completion of the deal.

"We expect to add eight to 10 branches which will enhance customer access to our products and services and therefore, benefits clients in terms of convenience," he said. *Doris C. Dumlao*

ERICSSON CEO IN MANILA

Ericsson Global president and CEO Carl-Henric Svanberg and members of the Ericsson Global management team were recently in Manila to meet with Ericsson customers and employees in the country as part of a regional tour in photo are (from left) Torbjorn Possne, senior vice president for group function sales and marketing; Bert Nordberg, chair of Philbank and Smartphone; Jan Sjoqvist, president for market unit Southeast Asia, Oceania; Johan Wibergh, head of business unit networks; Rajendra Pangarkar, president and country manager of Ericsson Philippines; Jan Wareby, head of business unit multimedia and Jan Frykhammar, head of business unit global services.

Tap facility for gov't IOUs launched

By Rainier M. Ocampo

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY (BTR), along with New York Stock Exchange-listed Thomson Reuters, announced the launch of an electronic system that improves the issuance of government debt instruments.

Called a tap facility, the system allows government securities eligible dealers (GSEDs) to electronically bid for additional offerings after a successful auction.

Through such electronic conduit, the awarding process and the generation of reports will be automated to ease the process of issuing additional securities.

The tap facility is a subcomponent of the Treasury's automated debt auction processing system, which is an electronic mode by which the national government sells government securities to investors.

National Treasurer Roberto B. Tan said the implementation of the tap facility was aimed at enhancing the government's efficiency in issuing more debt paper.

Tan said the aim of the system would help promote the growth and the competitiveness of the country's capital markets.

Reuters Pte Subgen, managing director of Thomson Reuters Philippines, said the tap facility would provide the Treasury and GSEDs more flexibility to offer local debt outside regular auction hours.

Also, Subgen said Thomson Reuters would develop a "fast, reliable and affordable solution" for small players in the market such as insurance companies, rural banks, thrift banks and other financial institutions.

He explained that the planned service would do away with manual transactions because the investors would send their buy and sell instructions electronically to the Registry of Scripless Securities or ROSS.

ROSS is the official electronic ledger that lists the absolute ownership, legal or beneficial titles or interest in treasury bills and bonds.

According to Thomson Reuters, the new and well-stable investors to download their securities across numerous directly from the system.

The company said this solution was based on a secure and reliable network that will process instructions in real time.

Also, the solution is transparent and noncollusive and will help minimize investors' exposure to the risks of manual processing of transactions.

Thrift banks vow to police own ranks

From page B1

practices of a few banks associated with a prominent group. He emphasize to the thrift banks that membership in this chamber requires compliance with regulatory rules that promote safe and sound management of our institutions," Garcia said.

At present, Garcia said the industry was responding to the needs of the domestic economy by providing credit to the real sector.

In his speech, Garcia also said the banking system had a unique opportunity of boosting their industries of banks placed in sore from the lingering global financial meltdown.

Former CTB president Alfredo Yao, in the same occasion, said that despite the tough economic times, thrift banks remained fundamentally sound as indicated by their increased deposit generation, steady lending activity and better asset quality.

Yao, who was president of CTB for two years, reported milestones for the association in 2008, including its active participation in and support for the initiative of the industry against the indiscriminate issuance by the courts of temporary restraint orders against bank closures. As such, billions of pesos in loans can now be recovered by the lending banks, which have been deprived of their right to pursue strike-point borrowers.

He said the CTB also introduced legislation on five points, which is soon to boost the banking sector through the prospect of having more borrowers with more secured collateral. By having more skilled bank, lending and other economic activities are seen to increase.

Yao said the group also played a key role in the passage of the Credit Information System Act, worked for the extension in 2011 to the incentive provisions of the stand-current-rate loans from the required submitters of income tax returns and audited financial statements (which would have expired last year), and pushed for the inclusion of a legal provision instituting the BSP to establish an interest rate program to encourage lending to micro and small as well as medium enterprises beyond the mandatory credit allocation to these enterprises.

SCIENCE/HEALTH

E-mail sr_news_health@inquirer.com.ph

Editor: Cesar G. Mangussang

New bone-loss treatment adds vitamin D

Text and photo by Charlie S. Bakar

WHEN IT COMES TO strengthening our bones, what comes immediately to mind is calcium.

Indeed, calcium is important considering that 99 percent of our skeleton (including our teeth) is made up of this white chalky substance.

The importance of calcium extends beyond its role as a major building block of our bone tissue since it also plays a role in our body's normal cell function, blood clotting, muscle flexing, neurotransmission and pulses as well as maintaining heart beat.

But did you know that no matter how much one takes in calcium—whether from food or supplement—the body will not be able to absorb this mineral without the help of another substance?

TAMESH TORRES (left) and Hosking explain the importance of vitamin D in bone health.

Vitamin D

"You could drink liters and liters of milk, eat all of the cheese and tofus in the world and still have weak bones. Why? It's because bones need both calcium and vitamin D to stay strong—vitamin D aids in calcium absorption and helps maintain normal bone mineralization process in individuals," explained Dr. Tamesh Torres Tandoh-Torres, an active consultant on bone and joint diseases and former president of the Philippine Rheumatology Association.

Tandoh-Torres added that while vitamin D could be obtained by just letting oneself exposed in sunlight, the body's ability to produce this substance decreases with age. One can also acquire Vitamin D by eating foods like cheese, mackerel and oyster.

"It's also interesting to note that there are more and more people today who avoid sunlight for vanity reasons," noted Dr. David John Hosking, consultant physician in the Division of Mineral Metabolism at Nottingham City Hospital, United Kingdom.

The result is inadequate absorption of calcium, which significantly contributes to the development of osteoporosis among women and the elderly.

Living tissue

"Our bone is not inert. It's a living tissue, in which there is a dynamic process of removing old bone and replacing it with new bone. Buildup requires the building blocks that included calcium. But as we grow older, bone loss occurs faster than bone growth, thus the higher the chance to have osteoporosis. Fractures from osteoporosis are almost easier as exercises in women as they are in men, especially after menopause since the female hormone estrogen stimulates buildup and discourages breakdown," Hosking explained.

Tandoh-Torres said broken wrists, hips and spinal bones are most common fractures in people with osteoporosis (although fractures could occur in any bone) and could result in pain, disability and other complications that could lead to early hospitalization and even death.

But there's a way to go around this problem, as Hosking explained that women and the elderly who don't get adequate exposure to sunlight and who may not eat a variety of food containing calcium and vitamin D, may get them from medications that help maintain adequate levels of these nutrients in the bones.

Pharmaceutical giant Merck, Sharp and Dohme (MSD) has recently launched a new duo of the fixed combination alendronate (a drug that helps not only prevent bone loss but also rebuild normal bone as well as preserve any bone developing fractures) and vitamin D, called Fosamax.

This once weekly tablet that contains 70 mg of alendronate sodium, included a higher dose of vitamin D (2,800 international units) in response to new international guidelines on supplementation for this vitamin.

"Spine, hip and wrist fractures are not the inevitable consequences of aging. Proper diet, exercise and a number of new medications like Fosamax represent an innovative therapeutic option for patients with osteoporosis that provide fracture prevention related to risk disease with the assurance of vitamin D dosed weekly," Hosking said.

Bugs on a plane

DISCOVER

Marnie Sandoz Baldoz

EARLIER THIS YEAR, A SIMmember from the University of Florida predicted that airliners around the world will be taking on more very many passengers in 2018, particularly in the middle of the year. Unlike the 2006 movie "Snakes on a Plane" however, these organisms will be much harder to see and counter.

According to a study by epidemiologist Andrew Tatem, parts of China, northern Europe and North America are more likely to see an influx of disease organisms and invasive plant, insect and animal species by July 2050 based on global trends in air travel and climate changes such as temperature shifts.

"The [world airport network] enables many of the world's most isolated and diverse ecosystems to become connected and act the newcomers of organisms to new habitats which they can become damaging invasive species," Tatem wrote in his study.

Most feared species

"The most feared of these species can cause damage worth billions of dollars, compromise national security, erode native biological diversity and affect human health."

Tatem's forecast model is based on several factors, the starred with a year's worth of flight schedule data for large and small aircraft taken from more than 800 airlines around the world. To get an idea of how busy the skies are, consider that for the period between June 1, 2006 and May 1, 2007, Tatem wrote that "there were 35,242,541 scheduled flights operating between 3,979 airports over 44,800 routes."

The epidemiologist used the 2006-2010 air traffic forecast data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to chart results. He also used the forecast results from two previous studies. A 2006 Iata study estimated that the number of passengers taking international flights is expected to rise to an average of 9 per cent. And a 2007 study by the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicted that global temperatures will rise by 0.2 degrees Celsius every decade.

Based on the Iata data, Tatem found that between 2007 and 2013 incoming visitors would likely increase significantly in places such as China, India, eastern Europe, north Africa and southeast Asia. More flights into these areas, he noted, mean more chances for foreign species (Tatem doesn't discuss whether or not these organisms are brought along deliberately, accidentally or unknowingly because these factors are still being studied separately) to enter the local ecosystems.

Counting climate change against the backdrop of his models indicated that in 2050, based on predicted climate changes, most airports would have similar enough climates that organisms would be able to move from one place to another and thrive by June, although July and August were likely to remain peak periods for air traffic.

Prevention measures

Tatem suggested taking preventative measures to avoid the havoc his models outlined in his study by charting climate change and air traffic information. his findings could be used to develop more efficient methods for countering the invasive biological diseases.

"Our best hopes at minimizing such invasions and the environmental, economic and health impacts they can cause, are through improved surveillance, prediction and control at international transport gateways," he wrote.

The study was published online on 22 in the journal Geography. Tatem did the work while he was still at the University of Oxford and currently holds joint appointments at the University of Florida's geography department and the university's Emerging Pathogens Institute.

E-mail the author at mazoz@yahoo.com.

Prevalence of kidney disease should prompt lifestyle checks

By Tessa R. Salazar

TRUE, IT MAY NOT BE THE NO. 1 killer disease among Filipinos (ranking "only" 18th in the list), but renal disease has its own bizarre way of creeping into a complacent, sedentary population. On the one hand, you may be enjoying all the conveniences and perks of modern life. The next day you're eating a dialysis center since your kidneys are just inexplicably quitting on you.

Such was the warning given by National Kidney and Transplant Institute executive director Enrique Ona. Health and nutrition advocates insist that a sedentary lifestyle and a diet laden with saturated protein, "junk" and salty food would almost certainly shoot up one's blood pressure and could eventually earn anyone a lifetime trip to a dialysis center. And mind you, Ona said, dialysis isn't cheap. At P40,000 to P60,000 per month, dialysis is quite literally draining one's body and bank accounts.

And if that isn't enough, consider a kidney transplant. The operation could earn the patient over a million pesos.

The numbers aren't encouraging. Ona estimated that up to 10,000 to 40,000 Filipinos need to undergo dialysis at any one time but only about 7,000 individuals can afford it.

Of those undergoing dialysis at NKTI, only 20 percent can expect to still be alive 20 months after starting their sessions because of lack of funds. Health insurance can shoulder around three months of dialysis treatment.

What is more worrying, Ona observed, is that the NKTI's physical capacities are limited. The institute cannot keep on expanding, he said. Government and private institutions outside of Metro Manila should develop not only dialysis centers but transplant treatments with transplantation. He urged that financial support would be developed for patients who need dialysis and transplant and improve and expand organ donation programs.

BP and kidney disease

Ona urged these seniors at the press conference of the World Kidney Day commemoration in Quezon City March 10 sponsored by Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

More than 120 countries commemorate World Kidney Day.

This year's commission highlighted high blood pressure (hypertension) as a key symptom and cause of chronic kidney disease (CKD). The theme "Keep the pressure down" stressed the role of hypertension to either damaging or destroying the body's organs, including the kidney.

Kidney disease is described as a "stealthy killer," causing death in many people with diabetes and hypertension and increasing a person's risk of suffering a heart attack.

Cardiologist Dr. Rody Sy, professor of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, stressed that an individual's better management of blood pressure actually deters the progression of chronic kidney disease and would make the individual less likely to require dialysis or suffer cardiovascular diseases.

He added that of the over 10 million hypertensive Filipinos, 1/4 percent are not aware of their condition, and only 20 percent are able to control their BPs.

Warning that hypertension is a silent killer, Sy said it is the leading risk factor attributable to worldwide deaths.

Dr. Agnes Bitalia, chair of the Department of Medicine at UP-Philippine General Hospital, said that if detected early, kidney disease can be managed, thereby reducing other complications.

Sy and Bitalia are urging the public to regularly monitor their blood pressures and undergo simple urine and blood tests to detect early signs of CKD.

Health Undersecretary Elmer Punzalan enumerated seven major healthy steps to prevent individuals from suffering from CKD. These are: Stop smoking; Stop drinking alcohol; Stop taking illegal drugs; Stop unprotected sex; Have a low fat, low-salt and high-fiber diet; Have physical activities; and, Have stress management.

Global campaign

The Philippine Society of Nephrology also spearheaded a global health awareness campaign focusing on the importance of the kidneys and in reducing the frequency and impact of kidney disease and its associated health problems.

Aside from motorcade, satellite lectures were conducted by nephrologists in other cities nationwide to raise awareness about the importance of the kidneys.

Endoscopy a clear view inside the body

DO YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY swallowing or experiencing constant vomiting or nausea? Do you have sudden weight loss or episodes of loose stool? These could be indications of abdominal and internal illnesses that can be properly diagnosed through a clear view inside the body using endoscopy.

"Today, endoscopy has become an important medical procedure to provide effective diagnosis and treatment of abdominal pain and related ailments with nonspecific symptoms. It provides a thorough examination of the gastrointestinal tract," said Dr. Gerardo Mendoza, consultant in gastroenterology of the Asian Hospital and Medical Center.

With the use of an endoscope, a thin flexible fiber optic tube with a tiny TV camera at the end that is connected to a TV monitor, endoscopy allows physicians to peep through the body's gastrointestinal tract. It uses fiber optics and powerful lens system providing lighting and clear visualization of the inside of your body. This procedure is commonly used to diagnose and treat various gastrointestinal diseases.

The common gastrointestinal endoscopic procedures performed today are the following:

- Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD) or Gastroscopy examines the esophagus, stomach and first part of the small intestine (duodenum).
- Colonoscopy examines the inside of the colon or large intestine can detect and identify inflammations, ulcers, polyps and colon cancers.
- Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), a combination of endoscopy and X-ray, examines the gallbladder, bile ducts and pancreatic duct.
- Enteroscopy is used to examine the small intestines, especially in persons with obscure gastrointestinal bleeding.

Endoscopic procedures are highly preferred today for their minimally invasive approach, thus letting patients feel less discomfort, Dr. Mendoza added.

For proper diagnosis of abdominal conditions through Endoscopic Procedures, the Asian Hospital and Medical Center has a Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Unit, which provides a full range of examinations and procedures in the care of digestive disorders and problems of the gastrointestinal system.

BUSINESS

Jan. remittances rose despite global crisis

Preliminary figures encouraging, says central bank

By Michelle V. Rarro

WHILE JOB CUTS ABROAD have led to projections of a decline in remittances this year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said there is reason to believe that money sent by Filipino overseas recorded a faster annual growth in January 2009 compared to that of December 2008.

According to BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo, preliminary reports from several banks revealed that remittances registered a year-on-year growth in the month of January. He said the growth rate could even be faster than the 0.2-percent annual rise to $1.1 billion posted in December.

For the entire 2008, remittances stood at $16.4 billion, up 13.7 percent year on year.

"Since deployment continues to be strong and initial figures from a few banks seem encouraging, then there is reason to believe that probably remittance in January was beyond the level seen in December," Guinigundo told reporters yesterday on the sidelines of the annual convention of the Chamber of Thrift Banks, where he served as one of the speakers.

Guinigundo said it is true that many overseas Filipinos have already lost jobs in the wake of the global crisis, but he added that the impact of this on remittances was offset by the opening up of new jobs markets.

Although the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration reported that an estimated 3,000 Filipinos have lost their jobs from October to February to Korea and Taiwan, Guinigundo said the agency likewise reported an increase in demand for Filipino workers in Canada, Australia and the Middle East.

"While [Filipino workers] lost markets in some countries, they gained new ones. Despite the crisis, Filipinos always manage to find jobs abroad," he said.

He also said there were over a million Filipinos deployed to work abroad last year, and this could be a source of comfort that remittances would continue to be strong this year. Inflation, working overseas normally have constants of at least two years, he said.

Under the official forecast of the BSP for the year, remittances would amount to $16.4 billion for the entire 2009—the same level as that recorded in 2008.

This forecast is a downward revision from the earlier projection of a 5- to 6-percent growth. The BSP said the lower outlook took into account the impact of the worsening economic situation in the United States and Europe, where many Filipino workers are based.

The BSP stressed, however, that even if remittance growth would stay flat, $16.4 billion is substantial enough to support consumption, which is a key driver of the country's economy.

Guinigundo said that despite the global crisis, the BSP does not see remittances contracting this year from last year's level because of demand for workers in other parts of the world.

Cebu have said that the large number of overseas Filipino workers is an indication of the lack of job opportunities in the country. Nonetheless, the government has been supportive of deployment of Filipino overseas as one way to ease unemployment problems.

Remittances serve as key driver of the economy as these highly influence household consumption. The segment that is saved, on the other hand, is used to fund investments.

A CONSTRUCTION worker secures metal bars at an overhead light railway system project. Foreign direct investment flows into the Philippines plunged 47.5 percent from a year earlier to $1.3 billion dollars in 2008 amid the global crisis, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

eTelecare bags deal with US firm

BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING firm eTelecare Global Solutions Inc. has inked an agreement with United States-based healthcare management services company Healthcare Solutions Group Inc. for the provision of various value-add support services.

In a regulatory filing, the company said the deal covered the provision of customer care, technical support and inbound sales services to Pratt's customers.

The services, to be performed via e-mail, chat and voice, will be delivered from one of eTelecare's facilities centers in the United States.

To be able to deliver these services to Pratt's clients, eTelecare said it had implemented a multichannel, integrated customer relationship management solution, employee skills assignment and knowledge management as well and other support services.

"eTelecare's portfolio of process-driven service offerings delivers real and quantifiable value for our clients. Our deep domain knowledge developed through years of relevant experience, especially in the communications sector, allows us to customize solutions that fulfill each client's needs," eTelecare president and chief executive John Hardie said.

Each is the creator of what it claims is the world's first e-mail-only mobile device, which allows 55 customers to stay connected via unlimited e-mail and text messaging.

"Our goal is to achieve the very best in customer satisfaction. eTelecare, with its wealth of experience in providing a full spectrum of customer interaction services, will be instrumental in helping us achieve our goal. By partnering with eTelecare, we are ensuring that the entire Pratt customer experience, from the initial sale to aftermarket support, is outstanding," Pratt co-founder and chief executive Brad Jones said.

eTelecare currently has more than 13,000 employees in the Philippines, the United States and Nicaragua.

Its Philippine delivery centers, which house 60 percent of its total employee count, are strategically located in different parts of Metro Manila, including Eastwood City, Makati, Alabang and Mandaluyong. It also has two centers in Cebu and one in Pampanga, not to the former US military base in Clark.

Abigail L. Ho

ADB to fund renewable energy firms

By Amy R. Remo

DUE TO GROWING ENERGY DEmands, the Asian Development Bank and its development partners are setting up a facility that would provide more capital for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in the Asia-Pacific region.

In a statement, the ADB said it would develop the Asia Clean Energy Finance Facility that would be initially funded by a $4.1-million grant from the Global Environment Facility—a global partnership established in 1991 to help developing countries fund projects that protect the global environment.

The seed capital assistance facility would be jointly managed by ADB and United Nations Environment Programme (Unep).

According to the ADB, the facility would "provide technical assistance to private equity fund managers and entrepreneurs to develop sustainable clean energy funds and financing for the early stages of such projects, share in the costs of development and transactions, and encourage taking riskier portfolios through a seed capital return mechanism offered on a per-project basis."

It further noted that the facility would increase access to financing as the newly supported sustainable energy enterprises and projects around the Asia-Pacific region.

With increased experience among financiers in investing in small-scale renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, mainstream energy investors would be encouraged to invest more in clean energy enterprises and projects, it added.

"By 2030, Asia is expected to account for nearly a third of global greenhouse gas emissions, so to slow that down, increases in investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency and other clean technologies are needed," said Mohsin Khan, investment specialist of ADB's private sector operations department.

"This facility will play a role in supporting a number of clean energy private equity funds in which ADB invests," Khan added.

In the Philippines, the Department of Energy is fast-tracking the completion of the rules and regulations governing the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 to attract more investments in the renewable energy sector.

Mario Marasigan, DOE energy utilization and management bureau director, earlier said interested investors are eyeing north and central Luzon and Visayas for biomass.

Marasigan said the firms that had seen beams of interest in the DOE or had visited the department, including Global Green Power, Arthan Energy, Deep Ocean Power Philippines and Agua Corp.

Other companies are also looking at hydropower projects in Cagayan, Pangasinan and Quezon, he added.

BIR tries hand at mentoring small firms

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE BUREAU OF INTERnal Revenue has found signs that small-scale businesses will perk up in the provinces as people try to supplement their income in light of the global recession.

In the first two months, 3,000 new micro-firms worth a combined P1 million set up shop in Benguet, according to Norberto Hilario, BIR regional director for the area.

This supports that the recently unemployed and workers expecting to be laid off are investing in small businesses to survive, Virog said.

But the BIR wants to make sure that these businesses function well to ensure the government of tax revenues, thus it has embarked on a business mentoring program to encourage the new enterprises, he said.

Mentoring involves routine refresher courses on taxation and business strategies, Virog said, "including basic suggestions as to where a business sign should be installed to draw [more customer traffic]."

He said the BIR had been tasked to collect more than this year to bankroll the government's poverty-alleviation and job-creation programs.

RP market to get taste of export goods

GOOD CONSUMERS WILL GET A CHANCE to buy the thousands goods produced exclusively for the export market during a five-day trade fair at month's end.

The DTI Exporters' Expo organized by the Department of Trade and Industry will feature items manufactured for export at lower prices.

"This event is a good opportunity for the general public to purchase world-class products at reduced prices," the DTI said, adding that this was part of its ongoing efforts to help local exporters market their products.

According to the DTI, exhibitors expected to number their stalls during the expo include those involved in arts and crafts, garments, holiday décor, electronics, fashion accessories, housewares, organizers and natural products, food, linens, home décor, furniture, and gift items.

In terms of visitors and buyers, the DTI expects those from institutional entities such as hotels, restaurants, transport providers, caterers, building contractors and hospitals to visit the trade fair.

"Known for their unique design and excellent handiwork, the Philippine exporters exhibiting in the DTI Exporters' Expo will showcase and sell special items to their current inventory. Order for customization of certain items based on local buyers' specifications may also be taken," the DTI said.

Helping the DTI mount the five-day event are the Bureau of Export Trade Promotion, Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions and the Philippine Trade Training Center.

Amid dwindling demand from abroad, local exporters are seeking the government's help in easing challenges.

In an earlier interview, Home Accents of the Philippines Inc. president Amrita Sengani said the government could extend various forms of assistance to exporters to prevent them from going under.

These included the release of the P1-billion Export Preservation Fund, which President Arroyo had "approved in principle."

Abigail L. Ho

Wages stable in BPOs amid global turmoil

By Abigail L. Ho

WORKERS IN THE BUSINESS PROcess outsourcing sector are assured of stable wages this year, even amid the global recession, but they should not expect salaries to increase much.

Oscar Salazar, chief executive of the Business Processing Association of the Philippines, said the wage structure in the local BPO sector had been "stable and flat" these past two years, and that same trend should be maintained this year.

"The general wage structure is pretty much stable," he said. "We already have a pretensive wage structure in BPO, with companies paying twice the minimum.

However, the BPO sector must be able to maintain an adequate supply of qualified labor to prevent "wage inflation."

"There's inflation in specialized areas such as engineering, architecture and [information technology]. Our labor costs should be not to be with India, so we have to have enough supply [of qualified personnel] to prevent wage inflation," he said.

"We need to maintain our productivity. It's a balancing act between paying the right wages and retaining competitiveness with other countries," he added.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines president Richard Stubbs added that while BPO sector wages were not likely to go up this year on account of the recession, at least now jobs could be expected.

"There will be new jobs. BPAP is set to building people's skills for the future, so we can have a bigger pool [of BPO employees]," he said.

Generally, however, most local firms are keen on hiking salaries this year, despite the economic downturn, according to the latest Grant Thornton International Business Report.

The report stated that 76 percent of local executives polled said they would likely take wages above the current inflation rate level or at least stay in line with the economic indicator.

Another 52 percent said they would not offer any pay hike, and only 2 percent said they would slash wages.

These numbers are rosier than those in other countries, the survey revealed, as only 10 percent of all business leaders polled globally said they expected to raise wages above the rate of inflation.

Around 21 percent said salaries should stay the same in 2009, and 2 percent said pay cuts were possible.

SALARIES in the local business process outsourcing sector will remain stable, and may even rise, this year despite the crisis, according to the industry's umbrella organization.

PROPERTY

Ways to make developers survive crisis

By Tess R. Salazar
Contributor

LAST WEEK, business PROPerty started a series that reported on Global Property Guide ringing the alarm bells that "Asia is no longer insulated" from the financial crisis originating from the West.

Proof that troubled times has landed on our shores as early as late 2008 is evident in Global Property Guide's survey of publicly-available house price time series for 2008, which showed prices declining steadily. And seen from a global perspective, the downturn is still accelerating.

Timely suggestions

So what can developers do to stay afloat and competitive during these times? Private Christian Cruz, UPG senior economist, provides these timely suggestions:

• Developers can provide cheaper housing units by cutting back on certain luxuries such as gyms, function halls and swimming pools. Middle and working-class households are more concerned with basic necessities such as access to public markets, schools, churches and public transport.

• While the provision of ample parking space is welcome, developers must focus on accessibility by ensuring that households can reach their homes quickly and safely even if they use public transport. Most property firms develop cheap and affordable housing units located in nearby provinces such as Rizal, Bulacan, Cavite and Laguna where commuting time takes 2 to 3 hours to major commercial hubs in Metro Manila.

• Developers must know the buying capacity of working and middle-class families. The international standard for affordable housing is 3 to 5 times the annual income. This implies that for someone who earns P30,000 a month, an affordable house for him/her should cost between P360,000 and P600,000.

• Developers can explore the potentials offering rent-to-own schemes for prospective homebuyers. Instead of relying on lump sum payments (most overseas Filipinos pay in cash or installments divided over 3 to 5 years), developers get a consistent income stream for 10 to 20 years through a rent-to-own scheme.

Cruz was also worried at how "confined" the Philippine housing boom has been, with developers focusing mainly on overseas Filipinos while largely ignoring an enormous local demand from the locally employed middle-class and working-class sector. Now that the demand from overseas Filipinos was wrong, an oversupply of unsold units could be "reinforced" to haunt buyers.

Blessing in disguise?

Alejandro S. Mañalac, president of the National Real Estate Association, said that he has just, he has not heard of any condominium price drops (because Property required has more than, amounting to the UPG report, entire 3-bedroom condo prices in Makati fell 2 percent in 2008 after an 11 percent rise during 2007).

"These data may have been based on resale units from owners [not developers] who had to make sacrifice sales," Mañalac said.

He added, "The 10-is this which started in 2008 was a blessing in disguise which caused the construction of many new high-rise projects to slow down but we expect over a glut, which is actually happening already in some areas where you have thousands of residential units due for turnover starting this year up to 2012."

According to Mañalac, the 856 15 luxury condo developers will reconsider their plans to build high-rise buildings (which takes 3 to 5 years to complete) in favor of mid-rate projects which they could turn over within a year, and thus recognize their income in their books. "It's a good thing that the implementation of this new accounting reporting standard was deferred until 2011," he said.

Another reason (the financial crisis) came at an almost perfect timing is that banks were already getting to be very up-

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Freiburg's solar tree house

CHILDREN'S FASCINATION WITH TREE houses evolved out of their desire to create a sense of place away from the serious world of adults. Lately, however, even adults have taken a liking to tree houses for their homes.

One particular "tree house" has caught the attention of many in the world-over. It is called the Heliotrope from the Greek words for "sun" and "turn."

The heliotrope in Freiburg is a high-tech house that rotates on a single huge axle at the center of the house. The column or "trunk" is standing on a tear gate with a swinging elevated ramp by an electric motor. The motion is possible to orient the building according to the movement of the sun.

The cylindrical house has triple heat-absorbing glazing on one side and high heat insulation on the other side. It has a bifluorescent solar panel on the roof and evacuated tube collectors for heat gain and passive solar windows.

It also has a waste compost system and a research monitoring system to control heating and cooling.

Rolf Disch is the German architect who designed the Heliotrope for his family residence. He is also responsible for many of the solar-powered buildings in the Freiburg, which is today considered as the "solar capital" of Germany and is a role model for the [illegible] Europe.

Freiburg can justly be called the birthplace of the green movement. It successfully campaigned against a nearby nuclear power station in 1975, thus establishing the [illegible] of the Green Alternative Movement. With Freiburg now a rallying point, a coalition of students, farmer and anti-nuclear activists together with proponents of a new social movement began to emerge. They did not want nuclear power in their backwards and fields. By 1986, the year of the Chernobyl disaster, the municipal council decided to abandon nuclear power. Solar energy was to become the main source of energy.

The government led to organic townships in this traditional city with many good infrastructures to help develop alternative energy solutions.

Today Freiburg with a 200,000 population has more than 900 solar installations and counting. Small-income renewable institutions and companies working to make renewable energy more practical.

Homes, neighborhoods and whole communities are individual power houses generating solar energy for their use. They belong to the energy-plus category of energy consumption because they generate more energy than they need.

World situation now

Carbon-emissions today, mainly from coal-powered plants and fossil fuels are affecting not only the atmosphere but also sea waters, and rainwaters acidity in some places has gone up 30 percent. This has a negative effect on marine life, animal life and human life.

People everywhere are looking around for renewable sources of energy. The pure ones, tides are either slow in the east and are so-

THE HELIOTROPE in Freiburg is a high-tech house that rotates on a single huge axle at the center of the house.

PHOTOS BY FERDINAND KAMPHUIS (BMW ARCHITECTURE)

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Antonello de Leone

nated of learning most of the coal that pollutes the planet. The other side of the argument is that the rich countries are hoarding the cheap products that the poor countries are producing. But that's another story.

European beneficiaries

At a recently concluded energy conference in Europe, energy efficiency and conservation have been made to the European Union were discussed together with other environmental issues.

It was stated that the Aurora region's standard of 220 kWh/sq/year, is much higher compared to the standard in Europe. And yet how many of us in the region are able to maintain energy use at that level for economic and buildings?

Nuclear power

The Philippines is now looking at the possibility of reviving the nuclear plant to reduce our dependence on coal as for our power plants.

There is one vital question that many would like to ask the experts. And that is, if and when we activate the nuclear plant, how do we handle nuclear waste without harming the environment and the people?

Perhaps we can study what Freiburg has done to earn the enviable title of the greenest city in Europe and probably in the world.

Freiburg enjoys regular sunshine six months of the year, and the people make good use of precious solar power. The city has been known for a unity of soft energy and heat economy (environmental policy, solar engineering, sustainability and climate protection are the main focus of their economic, political and urban development.

Our country has sunshine practically the whole year. When will we make good use of this precious and abundant resource? When will we muster the political will to carry on extensive research to develop affordable and environmentally safe technology to harness solar energy for homes and offices?

For comments or inquiries, email antonello.leone@bworld.com.ph

WOODSVILLE living and dining

Condo living redefined

FOR THE SINGLE PROFESSIONAL or the startup family the many resort and so-high-rise residential developments that now dot the landscape of the major urban villages of alternative lifestyle marked by conveniences one will not enjoy from more traditional living quarters. Moreover, condo living is less expensive than buying land and building your home from the ground up.

Still, not a few view condo construction, primarily due to preconceived notions that condo living is a glorified version of living in a barber, an impression that some **real estate developers have not helped** with their busy vertical developments and their cramped spaces.

Then again, there is Woodsville Vicente Madrigal, an up-coming gated community in Alvarville, Muntinlupa, master planned by premier real estate developer Robinsons Land Corp., which redefines condo living for single professionals and startup families with compelling features...not the least of which is the fact that 70 percent of the entire development has been left open.

7 distinct enclaves

Within this expanse of space, seven distinct enclaves for wellness and leisure have been created. These are Serenity Cove, which provides residents with a peaceful sanctuary; Poet's Nook for getting in touch with one's more poet; Nature's Overhang, with its Greek-inspired gardens, mini amphitheater and heavenly cage; Fitness Cove, for fashionistas and other fun ways to sweat it up in good health; Fun Park, for endless kiddie playdates; Picnic Grove, with its fruit-bearing trees for family bonding; and The Oasis, with its Mediterranean-inspired clubhouse and lifestyle-driven swimming pools.

And, of course, there is The Village Mall, which now houses Robinsons Supermarket, David's Salon, Mercury Drug and Dental Clinic.

All these add to the exceptional experience of living in Woodsville Vicente Madrigal, whose units—whether studio, one-bed-room or three-bedroom layouts—offer the space and the built in facilities/amenities from which the single professional or the startup family can readily create a home in the truest sense of the word.

Indeed, with furniture pieces that are compact, easy to move and serve multiple purposes, one can easily transform his/her condo unit into a truly refreshing and nurturing private escape, a space where one can retreat and find comfort from the bustly hurly of everyday living.

Making it work

Here are a few tips on how to make it work.

* Go for style and versatility. Pick stylish furniture pieces that can do double duty as storage units. That antique chest from the home of your parents or grandparents can make not only a great coffee table or even additional seating but also store plenty of personal effects inside, while storage cubes can serve as side tables. In fact, when it comes to accent tables, go for those with drawers and shelves to maximize storage options. Use bar as dining tables are concerned, choose one with leaves, which can be easily expanded when the need arises.

* **Go ahead and rent.** Because it's quite likely that you will entertain on some occasion or other, think of renting tables or stackable/foldable chairs. They are easy to lug out when guests are expected, and easy to store away afterward. Think catering, too, for dire kitchen like serving trays, bowls and pans. These aren't necessary once dishes and at the same time give you plenty of tools to work with.

* **Off the wall.** Look around your condo/quarter—see all the storage opportunities and more than those walls, cribs. Start about mounting your flat-screen LCD on the wall? How about wall-mounted lighting and pendants for illumination in the living room or the bedroom? These take up zero space versus having side tables and lamps. Moreover, consider adding shelves to walls—not only do they add storage space but their contents (books, coffee mug collection, etc.) certainly add personality to your space.

* **In the mood.** Whether spaces and storage are at a premium or not, one will be well served by maximizing every inch of storage space. For example, instead of having it collect dust, use the around space under couch beds to store toys, magazines, personal effects, out-of-season clothes and shoes/slippers. There are plenty of beautifully designed storage options now available in department stores and home furnishing shops. Also, think of extending your kitchen cupboards all the way to the ceiling. Sure, retrieving the items stored there may require a ladder (try, but at least that can't gather on top of them).

At Woodsville Vicente Madrigal, future homeowners will enjoy all these and a lot more—and at price points for its studio, two-bedroom or three-bedroom units that make condo living not just an alternative but thoroughly desirable.

WOODSVILLE Clubhouse

Ways to make developers survive crisis

From page B1-1

greater in financing buyers up to 90 percent of the purchase price for some projects. The good thing, though, is that they were still very strict with the screening and compliance with their requirements."

Pricing schemes

Mathalac agreed that developers should reevaluate their pricing schemes, especially of condos, in order to sell. "For this does not mean that they have to lower their prices since they really still have to cover themselves for future increases in construction costs. However, the developers should be more prudent in their price increases since the market is made up of real-users who are really looking for more value for their money unlike before when real-users, investors and even speculators took up the units."

Mathalac added that developers should also be more wary of offering easy-payment schemes which are somehow similar to "subprime" accounts—one of the key sources of the US housing crisis. Based on actual data, most of those who canceled their payments or purchases were buyers who paid minimal amounts (usually the reservation fee route) and a few monthly installments under the "no down payment" terms. On the other hand, buyers who had already made substantial down payments (20 to 30 percent of the commercial value of the property) were less likely to discontinue their investment.

Will there be more condo projects put up, but with less people buying them?

Mathalac sees the building half-full. "Unlike most of our neighbors in Asia, prevailing is very much an accepted practice here compared to their policies wherein the developers will have to build first before they can sell. Going a step further, some of the big developers only start their construction once they have hit over 60 percent in sales. This means most if not all the buildings under construction that you see now are already substantially sold if not totally sold out already. Now, having winners for these units which were purchased primarily to generate rental income is another story."

WORLDBEX 2009

Exhibiting sustainable development

FOR THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION industry, green has become much more than just a color—it has become a cohesion.

Given this, it's not surprising how the Philippines World Building and Construction Exposition (WorldBex), the biggest and most extended of its kind in Asia, reflects this.

During an orientation of WorldBex 2009 exhibitors and participants, WorldBex Services International founding chair Joseph Ang, introduced this year's theme "Leading the Way to Sustainable Development." "This is [term which] marked the organization's aim to be at the forefront of local initiatives toward sustainable development.

Long considered as Asia's indispensable source of information and technology in the world of construction, WorldBex is aimed at introducing the latest trade advancements in the field of sustainable building.

Imperative to go green

Ang asserted that with the help of the industry's most influential movers and shakers, they can strengthen the imperative to go green. "Together, we can come up with resolutions and action plans to build to the most sustainable way possible."

The mid-orientation was held more than **a month before the actual show**, which will be held on March 18-22 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila, to give exhibitors ample time to be enthroned in the organizer's plans for WorldBex 2009.

Those who have attended the orientation included Rainier Aquino, president, Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers; David Chang, senior sales manager, Hardeng Philippines Corp.; Melvin Perez, marketing services and corporate communications officer, Siemens Douglas Philippines; Pia Guinto, marketing head, Pryce Steel Corp.; engineer Arthur N. Escudero, national president, IIEE; and representatives from Cubao Trading.

Strong foothold

"We know that we've already gained a strong foothold in the industry," shared Ang, citing their expected visitor base of 100,000 and 600 exhibitors from at least 20 countries. "And as for us, the next step is finding out how to utilize this unique opportunity given to us...and pushing for sustainable development seems to be the right and not to mention the most pragmatic thing to do."

In line with the exhibition is the most practical WorldBex seminars, where international speakers, experts in the fields, share their knowledge with local trade professionals. This year, there's a marked focus on green architecture and sustainable design in the seminars with architect-advocates Dinah Alcantara, Leo Almario, architect Heloc Palafox and Christopher Asuera from Singapore included in the lineup of speakers.

"WorldBex has moved beyond just being a trade show," noted the Worldbex chair. "I'd like to think that it'll become a venue where minds meet and minds change—for a more conscientious industry and for a better environment."

DMCI Homes offers first-rate amenities at Mahogany Place 3

THE COMMUNITY AMENITIES OF A RESIdential development is an important consideration for homebuyers, aside from location, value for money, and space. The ideal balance of all these elements when compared to other choices can swing the deal for purchasing a home.

In many subdivisions, amenities for entertainment and recreation are very basic: a outdoor bar to make do with a multi-purpose clubhouse, swimming pool, basketball court and playground. However, a discerning buyer seeking only premium returns on his investment will not settle for anything less. The amenities available in his chosen development should also meet his needs for convenience, comfort, family entertainment and private relaxation. These include premium amenities and services, similar to those offered in exclusive country clubs.

CLUBHOUSE and swimming pool

Exclusive residential enclave

This is the vision behind the entertainment and recreation amenities offered at Mahogany Place 3, the exclusive residential enclave being developed by DMCI Homes in its Township Central in Tagaytay City. This development has been masterplanned to be a low density Asian-themed community. Only 299 units will be built in this eight-hectare property to give residents the wide open spaces and green surroundings which make it an ideal place to settle and raise a family.

DMCI Homes' project architect Ralph P. Custodio said the amenities offered at any development should have a natural location, as well as cater to the different needs of the residents. "For Mahogany Place 3, DMCI Homes has raised the bar for the amenities it offers.

"The central amenities area of Mahogany Place 3 offers a wide range of country club-inspired amenities and recreational facilities," said Custodio, aside from the basic features of an executive complex, we have introduced various new amenities not found in other DMCI Homes' properties. Amenities such as the sauna and 20-seat mini theater really speak of luxury that our market deserves," he added.

STEPHEN Custodio, architect for Mahogany Place III

Amenities available

Amenities available at Mahogany Place 3 are distinguished into indoor facilities and outdoor amenities. The two-story clubhouse has been designed to complement the exclusivity of the property. It will have a country club ambience—privacy, exclusivity and first-class equipment. There will also be clubhouse officials ready to assist residents and their guests with their needs.

The ground floor of the clubhouse has a function area for poolside dining. Mom and dad can watch the kids enjoy themselves at the kiddie pool as they relax or chat with neighbors and friends. There is also a view deck on the second floor giving residents a full view of the pool area.

Those seeking a low-impact workout will surely enjoy the swimming pool. Swim to your heart's content or just splash away the hours by the poolside. The central amenities area also has a basketball court where hardcore fans can practice their shots. The kids can bond with their friends at the children's playground. Preschool kids will find much to do at the sandbox.

Weekend delights

On weekends, the families can have a barbecue lunch or dinner at the gazebos spread throughout the amenity area. The gazebos are equipped with barbecue pits where food can be grilled in an instant.

Indoor amenities at the clubhouse include a fitness gym and a dance studio. Another room in the house, a fitness study nook among the amenities in many clubhouses. The clubhouse also has a 20-seater mini theater, another unique amenity feature. Equipped with the latest home theater equipment and fitted with theater-style seats, the family can reserve the room for special screenings. There is also a game room where cool and cold can also play billiards, darts or foosball.

The clubhouse will also have a mini mart, laundry pickup booth and water station. Residents no longer have to leave the premises just to meet their daily needs.

Mahogany Place 3 is another major residential development by DMCI Homes, the country's first triple A builder/developer that offers modern income-earning families optimum value for their money by providing homes with exceptional features and amenities and world-standard level of craftsmanship borne out of more than 30 years experience in the construction and development industry.

The Grand Towers: A Dream Investment in the Heart of Manila

The convenience of city living matched to tranquility, privacy and security is on track to becoming a reality at The Grand Towers, a beautifully crafted twin tower mixed-use condominium at the heart of Vito Cruz, Manila.

Nicolas Pearlly Inc., the developer of The Grand Towers, said that the first of the two 48-storey skyscrapers would be ready for occupancy towards the end of next year, allowing owners to start enjoying their new homes and the multitude of amenities that go along with it.

As other developments in and around Metro Manila have slowed down, construction has been brisk at The Grand Towers. Metro Towers, the first of the two condominium towers, is steadily gaining altitude with the structure already hitting the mid-way mark.

"The development is actually ahead of schedule. We are confident that before the end of next year, our future homeowners will be comfortably ensconced in their new residences," Ray Diaz, Nicolas Pearlly president, said.

Update for the 600-unit condominium has also been brisk, according to Diaz, with close to 70 percent of the residential units already.

"Interest in The Grand Towers is very high. This is likely because The Grand Towers is a wise investment in terms of its location, superior amenities as well as the track record of Nicolas Pearlly of delivering its property developments on schedule," Diaz explained.

Diaz said Nicolas Land will be sharing more construction milestones to existing and potential investors of The Grand Towers during its Investors' Day on March 21 at the 1820 Golden Empire Tower on Roxas Boulevard.

Located in Vito Cruz, Manila, the Grand Towers is centrally placed a few minutes from the Makati Central Business District and an easy drive from domestic and international airports via Roxas Boulevard.

The Grand Towers is also a stone's throw away from a number of the country's premier academic institutions like the De La Salle University, the College of St. Benilde and St. Scholastica's College.

But more than its close proximity to business, academic and commercial centers, The Grand Towers is the only condominium project for this market in Manila that boasts of supreme leisure amenities that help provide a respite to the bustling lives of its future residents.

Aside from an outdoor swimming pool, lap pool and kid's pool, residents can also enjoy other fitness activities through The Grand Towers' jogging path, outdoor fitness station and its fitness center.

Counters like the recreational area where residents can relax as their children play at the Kid's Outdoor Play Area and the Kid's Sand Box. For fun, group activities, The Grand Towers also has a social hall, function rooms and a game room.

With The Grand Towers, one may inspire Excellence and Reward Success. There are only a few more units remaining as call 522-0975 or email mail@thegrandtowers.com to get the chance to be part of The Grand Towers community.

Local firm sets new sights on Filipino architecture

A NEW ARCHITECTURAL FIRM THAT seeks to introduce a fresh design culture in public buildings and other landmark projects in the Philippines recently announced its incorporation. Bong Recto, who until late last year was a managing partner at Recto+Cuna, is the principal designer of the newly organized Rehistects Inc.

Until last year, Recto's partnership with Carmelo Cuna had consistently been named as one of the Philippines top architectural firms by credible industry sources. The firm is credited with the design of Pacific Plaza Towers in Fort Bonifacio Global City and the Thailand Stock Exchange among other iconic buildings.

The establishment of Rehitects following the partners' parting of ways concretizes the intentions of the new firm's founder, Bong Recto, to focus on the design of socially relevant buildings and to encourage Filipino architectural expertise to meet global standards.

First projects

Among Rehitects' first projects is the contemporary UCTopaz Asian Center at the University of the Philippines, which will be ready by June. Commercial showroom, Quezon City SP Installment Group Ty and Toyota Motors Philippines awarded to the new firm in late 2008 the project that includes an architectural and interior design. The series of rectangular buildings with canopies that curl back tactfully like Machu promises to be one of UP's architectural landmarks upon completion late this year.

According to the 36-year-old Recto, the name "Rehitects" also represents a conscious effort to promote a design philosophy rather than an architectural firm built around a key personality. He notes: "Our firm is organized around the vision that any design must provide the optimum solution to a client's requirements and budget, that it must accommodate environmental and cultural concerns and at the same time be esthetically pleasing."

THE NAME "Rehitects Inc." is a conscious effort to promote a design philosophy rather than a firm built around a key personality. Its principal designer is Bong Recto, far right.

A distinct departure from Recto+Cuna's reputation in the residential condominium developer's architecture of choice, Rehitects aims to establish a strong presence in the field by building landmark institutions, churches and other mid-size buildings.

Bong Recto was the partner in charge of 1,000-seater Church of the Risen, Ateneo de Manila University's massive triangular structure described as "an abstraction of a bird in flight." The church was a first for Recto+Cuna and emphasized a desire to Bong on feature resides in the unconventional arena. The project was followed last year by the St. Monica and Rizardo Leong Hall in Ateneo de Legaspi by its grand foyer that offers a peek at a quadrangle. Recto was likewise responsible for the design of that project.

RECTO

PREFERRED BROKER

After the phenomenal success of phase one of Raffles Residences, a Kingdom Hotel investment development located in a prime location in Greenhills, Mandaluyong, arrangements are now in place for the release of phase two. In July 2008 sales report was established when $45 million was sold in a single day, with the majority of sales brokered by agents within sign-up Property. At the end of this month, sign-up will again be working alongside the KHI team as a preferred broker, when phase one is released to the market through a PEP Selection event followed by a public grand opening. From left are sign-up Property Holdings Inc. VP-Sales & Marketing, Tina Mercurio, KHI Property Advisors Frank Kim and Carolyn Ho and KHI Sales Director Steve Cortez.

PROPERTY

Service apartments, residences, resorts set to increase demand

By Charles E. Bukar

IN THESE TRYING ECONOMIC times, every investment or management decision counts. And for a number of owners, having their properties or portions of them handled by guest services, management and marketing agencies providers could be the wisest decision.

"The region's (the Philippines included) property market is set to enter tougher months ahead and if you are not careful, things could go from bad to worse. At the moment, serviced apartments, serviced residences and resort properties are likely to be successful in the current economic climate as travelers look for more affordable options," said John Cole, president of Quantum Hotels and Resorts, one of the leading condominium hotel and resort property management companies in Southeast and East Asia.

In fact, Cole said there is now a good demand for well-run serviced apartments and is set to grow faster than the hotel sector as corporate clients realize the advantages.

"For organizations with teams, or individual business travelers working on projects or relocating with their families to this region, the ability to organize a real home-from-home is becoming a welcome alternative to the traditional hotel stay," Cole said.

To prove his point, Cole reported that Quantum is now set to manage two new hotels in Bangkok. If this pattern through, Quantum will become the first Philippine hotel company to enter Thailand's hospitality industry.

"Quantum is also looking at expanding its management properties in China with to the year," Cole added.

One of the reasons for attracting partners abroad is the fact that Quantum has a strong track record in assisting major developers with real estate sales by offering its professional after-sales services to real estate investors.

"We have a Hong Kong regional office which leads our international sales, marketing and development efforts," Cole shared.

Double

Here in the Philippines, Cole added that Quantum plans to double the size its managed hotels, condo-hotels and resorts. This includes doubling its rooms in Boracay Island by mid-2009 (Astoria Trousdale and Ayala Station).

Currently, the company manages eight properties in the Philippines. These are The Malapascua Plaza in Pinag City, BSA Tower, BSA Suites, Perla Mansion, all in Makati City, Tower Veranda in Quezon City, and The Residences at Fairways and Riviera Newcomat in Boracay Island.

Established in 2000, Quantum Hotels and Resorts management services were specifically developed to meet the requirements and standards of high to mid-level serviced apartments, residences, resorts and hotels.

"Each property managed by our team is unique catering to the needs of its investors and partners while assuring its guests high level of accommodation and service standards," Cole explained.

Fully furnished

A serviced apartment managed by Quantum are fully furnished, self-contained flats offering the comfort and convenience of a hotel with all the amenities one would expect from a fully functional flat.

"They are equipped with kitchen and laundry facilities and are fully serviced with weekly cleaning, linen and towel change. Indeed, serviced apartments are an attractive concept for business travelers, offering a cheaper and more spacious alternative to a hotel room," Cole said.

Professionals who are relocating or involved in long-running projects or training are likely five clients of Quantum managed properties.

"At Quantum serviced suites, for example, our guests can experience all the comforts of home while indulging in our refined hotel services such as daily maid, room services, 24-hour front desk and security as well as enjoy hotel-level standard of services," he said.

THE MANHATTAN Perfection Residences have the grand transfer pavilion, which links Manhattan Garden City residents to the LRT2 and MRT lines and to the rest of the metro.

Start being mobile from Manhattan Garden City

THE HEAVY TRAFFIC THESE days makes it discouraging to go out every day—whether it is for work, to shop, or just for leisure/bonding. In the city, driving your car or taking the bus, especially along Edsa, is a killer, and once trapped in a traffic jam you could lose a lot of time. For a commuter, the MRT is always your best bet. Traffic here is out of the equation, and the travel time on a train is more reliable.

This is why for Megaworld's Manhattan Garden City, the country's first-ever garden-inspired, transit-oriented community, mobility is part of the overall plan and design. Located on Edsa, in the heart of the Mandaluyong, within the Ortigas Center, its residential buildings are the first-ever to be connected to two existing mass transit systems—the LRT 2 and MRT.

Best feature

So whether you want to go to Quezon City Hall, Cubao, to top universities such as Ateneo de Manila or the University of the Philippines, the train station is just a walk away from Manhattan Garden City's 729-meter long garden walkways. Trains both mass transit systems are connected to LRT-1, getting to Dasmariñas or even as far as Calamba will be no trouble at all.

For the residents of Manhattan Garden City, the rest of Metro Manila is just a train ride away. This is the mobility that a resident urban warrior needs to maximize his or her life inside during workdays.

"The best feature of Manhattan Garden City is its connection to two existing mass transit systems. It is the only residential condominium that boasts this feature, and many clients have responded positively," noted Megaworld Central Properties Inc. President Anthony Charlemagne Yu.

The weekend is another story. After a week of commuting back and forth for work, residents can look forward to a relaxing weekend holiday just an elevator ride and a leisurely walk from their units at the super amenities of Manhattan Garden City.

Over at Manhattan Parkview Residences, the second phase of Manhattan Garden City lies a basketball court near Tower One where one can have a pick up game with the neighbors and friends. A trellised walkway connects the first tower to Tower Two where residents can relax under the cover of nature's beauty in the garden with the soothing sounds of water from the fountains. Tower Three houses the rest of Manhattan Garden City's super amenities, from tennis courts to a tropical pool with lap pool. There is also an outdoor spa to relax in. Inside, there are billiard tables and even video games in the game room.

Amenities

Residents of Manhattan Garden City can enjoy all the amenities that are just steps away from their home. Aside from the recreational facilities, there is also a business center and a function room that can handle 120 people across.

However, shopping in the mall is never out of the question. Araneta Center's Gateway Mall is just a short walk away. And if there's a game or a concert at the Araneta Coliseum, parking would not be in the list of your concerns, since it's practically your next-door neighbor.

Whatever it is that residents need—from getting around the city, to just staying in—Manhattan Garden City is a haven, indeed.

To start being mobile at Manhattan Garden City it's best to inquire for your investment options. Visit www.themanhattan.gardencity.com.

THE DECK at Gateway Mall is the perfect place for Manhattan Garden City residents to treat loved ones for some fine dining.

MANHATTAN Garden City is the only transit-oriented development connected to both the LRT 2 and MRT 3 lines for greater ease of movement.

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A Super tribute to Francis Magalona

Fans and friends remember The Man From Manila with words, pictures, artworks and songs

Permanent mark

By James Ragan

I'M PROBABLY NOT THE BIGGEST fan of the Masters Rappers. But I would certainly count myself as one of the millions of people who were and are still being influenced by his patriotism. Through his music, nationalism was rekindled. Being from the hip-hop scene, it was easy to follow his lead because it was no longer corny or "Tagalog" to be "makabayan" when you have Francis M on your side. He made us sentimental how cool it is to be Filipino and how we shouldn't be ashamed. He made it easier for us to be comfortable in our own brown skin.

Yes, I'm probably not his biggest fan. But I'm his believer.

I wanted something permanent to memorialize Kiko. I had my own version of the "3 Stars and a Sun" tattooed on my back. Two days later, he passed away.

'We'll have cold summer nights without you. May you rest in peace.' - Joel Cotonduan, Rat Wiseg and Liza Negal

A Super tribute to Francis Ma

The photographer as a subject

By Tere Epperson

THIS WAS THE SECOND OR THIRD time I had photographed Francis. I was commissioned to shoot him for Pulp magazine. We had finished some fairly straightforward photographic shots, toward the end of the shoot, I noticed that Francis was wearing a necklace with a cross pendant. I asked if we could somehow include the crucifix in the image. I saw that he had tattoos on his back so we took the cross and positioned it so it fit in the middle of the cut tattoo. I figured that Francis was so well-known and was such an icon in the music industry that there was no need to show his face.

Working with Francis was a pleasure, he was one of those were individuals who just got it when it came to making an image that was both strong and relevant. I also liked the fact that he enjoyed to participating in the whole process.

Five years with Francis

By Mimie Magbanua

going to play rock'n'roll." He was full of energy a nonstop machine that never ran out of ideas.

The most memorable times I spent with Mr. was when we visited him at the hospital in December last year, and our trip to my hometown, Antique, in 2005. Those hours we spent in the hospital felt even longer than the five years we had known each other. I realized how great he really was. He was simply amazing and extraordinary.

I am very lucky and honored to have met and been friends with a great artist, a great man. I still can't believe he is gone.

Francis Magalona and Me

By Zel Zabarsa

FRANCIS M TRANSCENDED boundaries. It didn't matter which genre his music belonged to or which generation he was from. His message proved through social classes and prejudices. He deserved all the love and respect he got in his lifetime and beyond.

Master Francis.

You became an icon and a legend. To me, you're the Francis M who gave me "Mga Kaibigan" and "Bato From Manila" to sing and dance to when I was a kid. When my mind opened and I had matured, as adolescent anxiety struck, you gave me "Babaeng Walang Hiya." When nationalism took over my being, you gave me "I Miss and a Bet." When I learned of heartaches, you gave me "Cold Summer Nights." All are timeless songs as they are relevant then and now.

You were supposed to be an invincible demigod, and so it took some time before the fact of your loss sank in. I guess it's because your being ill couldn't make its way into my reality in the first place. It was a battle to be won. Nothing more, nothing less.

All has been said about you. What I would like to add to that is you're the epitome of living the great life. You lived your life way beyond words existing. You grabbed and held the world in your hand. You pushed yourself and conquered your dreams. You owned not the critics and objectors. You dared to be different. You dared to say what you had to say. You did what you wanted to do, and in the process, you created pure brilliance.

You are an inspiration. You rocked and you will be missed.

X

To read the entire blog entry, visit: http://pinoyexchange.com/blogs/zel/Magalona-and-me.html.

Two Francises

By Francis Gaerlan

EVER SINCE I WAS A KID, PEOPLE/EX-adults would ask me what my name was and I would say "Francis po," the first thing they'd say was, "Francis Magalona?" Ahahahaha ding, para akkid rin, hindi ko naman/hindi rin nag Francis Magalona ng sing-a-ratus. And because of that, and because of him, I'm proud of my name.

'This landmark song of his was so touching and influential, I incorporated it in my tribute to him as Master Rapper.'

– Jed Angelo Engcoy

Two MTV VJs

By Marc Abaya

HERE'S A PICTURE I FOUND when Francis and I were judges at the 2007 MTV VJ Hunt. Ms. Magalona has always been a hero. He was a phenomenal person. He was a musician, actor, host and director. I still always look up to him.

We will miss him

By Tessa Prieto-Valdes

LAST YEAR, I TIED UP WITH the Camera Club to raise funds for the Philippine National Red Cross Makati Branch. Francis was one of the generous photographers who gave their time and talent wholeheartedly.

He hosted the opening of the Camera Club of the Philippines Center and I remember joked with him that he looked pale that evening.

He called us the next to next day and dramatic. If I had only one regret about the Celebrity Darts shirt, it would be that I didn't perform a duet with him. That scheduler couldn't match because of his live taping in "Eat Bulaga!" We will surely miss him.

You taught me how to rap

By Michelle Pagsisi Mahiwawa

I LIVE IN JAPAN NOW AND HAVE BEEN SO BUSY TAKING CARE of my baby that I only found out he passed away days after it happened. I want to say "Thank you" to Francis M. Because of him, I learned how to rap—mashing-sandra 'yung mga pinoy ei...

Foodies, unite

By Edel Santiago

I TOOK THIS photo last June 2007 when Francis and I'm joined me on my pre-birthday celebration.

Aside from being a talented musician, actor and photographer, Francis was also a "foodie." Being a "Foodie" myself, I was all ears when he explained something about Kobe beef, the best wagyu to cook a crab, the best dining place at Dampa on Macapagal Avenue and how to prepare step-by-step alabang-balut. He also taught me some pointers on how to use my pedicel-and-shace camera.

Thank you, Francis M for the friendship and the memories.

Fearless Francis

By Perl De Castro

FRANCIS WAS THE LEAST PRETENTIOUS and the most down-to-earth guy in Philippine showbiz...no arrogance whatsoever. That's what I remember and like about him the most.

Francis is also one of the most fearless people I know.

Think back to early '90s ie. the (heh of that stupid "Hip-Hop vs Metal/Rockers" craze. We played Amusement Stadium in a crowd that pelted the stage with every object they could get their hands on: water bottles, bricks, shoes, rocks, bags of crackers, etc.

Francis did not cut his set short and he didn't get back at the crowd by throwing them with his opus musicopheric—he kept on going and did what he was supposed to on that stage.

The final cut that finally got Francis accepted by the mob crowd was his first time Yuan Club thrash gig. He took to the stage under the worry gaze of the audience, predominantly Club Dredd regulars, who, for the most part, stared intently at the stage with folded arms, looking for any excuse to start hurling whatever they could get their hands on.

He tore that stage up, and by the end of the night, another battle was broken down by Francis M.

This fearless ethic was among his strongest traits. He was never afraid to entertain himself regardless of what others might think and say—and in the end he won most people over to his side of things.

The author uploaded a tribute to Francis M on his YouTube page...a video of him playing "Rakenkruisjes Aan Zee" on a 15-string dreamt guitar. In words, "A musical tribute to my friend, collaborator, brother-in-music Francis Magalona (1964-2009). It's been truly an honor to write, record and perform music with you, Francis. Salida for everything." To watch the video, visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UEnedEETUo.

It

By Gang Badoy

LAST YEAR, WHEN I WAS still living in Kamputxan, I had a basement parking spot beside the elevator. One time, a car was parked on my space. I was instantly annoyed. I braked right behind the car and left a note on the windshield. I scribbled, "Hoi to you, sozzled's van. This is my duly assigned spot, text this number when you need to move your car."

Soon, I got a text message profusely apologizing and asking if I could move my car because they had to leave soon.

On my way down, the lobby elevator doors opened and there was Francis M about to enter. We greeted each other and chatted on our way down to the basement. Then he said, "Hey, Gang, let's talk upstairs by the driveway. I blocked someone's parking and I need to move my van."

We found each other door moaning antidotes and by and that he had even planned to stick his "I Stan and a Bet" sticker on the "offended" car. Too bad he didn't have one on hand this time. We talked about his project with Bly, the

By Mark Bautista

I MET FRANCIS MAGALONA FOR the first time in 2003, back when I was still a newbie in the music industry.

I had seen and heard him few of times on TV, radio, even live onstage before I was formally introduced.

But this time it was different. My first project for the label was a compilation album that he produced featuring rapper from a musician about contest. I would get to work with the Master Rapper himself.

My fondest me of Francis Mag

By Miles Monasalla

I HAVE BEEN A FAN OF FRANCIS Magalona for as long as I can remember, avidly singing and dancing to the tune of "Mga Kaibigan Ko" when I was eight years old. Imagine the joy when I got the chance to work with my childhood idol in many of our events.

I had the chance to meet him in an event and was able to get his number because he personally confirmed his attendance. He was among the few celebrities I knew who did not rely on assistants or PAs to RSVP for them.

I was just an account manager then when our supervisor assigned me to liaison with one of my clients. Part of the plan was to gather celebrities and personalities to donate their favorite photos to be part of the album. I did my research on actors and actresses who were photo enthusiasts and found out that Francis Magalona was really into photography, having been a professional magazine at the Cosmopolitan of the Philippines for many

I decided to send Francis an SMS invite. I wasn't sure if he'd agree to it.

A few minutes later, I received a call.

"Hey, Miles, I'd be more than happy to help you out in your event. It'll take on a weekday, I can only make it past 5 p.m. because I

agalona

was a good run

and a thanks and an endorser.

I cried, as here, in Iloop Pram. I'm spoiled. I wanted to tell him through Ely or Raissa that Sarah's concert and participation during the launch of "The Girl Code," but I knew he was in medical isolation. I decided to save that piece of good news for the next time we bumped into each other again. Friends may have died last week but I feel the need to send him my personal pangasin-regner.

Friends,

Here's a photo of Sarah dur-

ing "The Girl Code" launch. I know I promised not to tell him that you spoiled the engineering of this project, but I guess today it's okay to do so. I already told you that it was your emails that announced my self-incorporated patriotic thoughts post-Edsa to Mr. four computer stations to just go ahead and count our native ditz when Sprary Top-siders and British Steve Silver were the drill, the way "Mga Kababayan Ko" made me sing out loud the phrase "Ako anang Pilipi-no noonan" repeatedly as a teen. again—man, I tell you, that must have done something to my brain. It was exactly that moon, that energy, that intergame three for love of country that sparked my idea for Buck Ed even many many years after Pre-Bus, I still always be grateful, Francis.

You were always ahead of our generation. It was a great run—too short I think—but a very great run nonetheless.

Keep making pioneering icons a Francis Magalona, solo o in opawong Buck Ed Philippines.

We salute you, The Man From Manila...and we will forever be grateful.

March 8, 2009
6:33 p.m.

A song on Multiply

DJ MISSE OF THE ABAPELLAS recorded his own version of "Kaleidoscope World" in his studio after running home from Francis Magalona's wake.

The next day, he re-sent it to the wake with the rest of the Abakellas to sing as the Mass held for Francis. "Ang kwap-kwapera, nakakatulig ng dib-dib," he wrote in his Multiply.

The song, which features Jerome Nasan on violins, is his tribute to the Master Rapper. "Enjoy the pasery lah' by one of the most important OPM artists," he wrote.

The song has received positive feedback from friends' fans. "An emotional rendition! It drove my wife to tears!," wrote one Multiply user.

To hear or the song, visit http://djmjsc.multiply.com/music/item/46/Kaleidoscope_World_djmjsc_1_song

Francis M up close

...government section that a uncomplicated artist like him ...difficult, that he'd have a ...ngs. I was wrong. He was my ...of that the most established ...the most professional. From ...have seen a attitude. Working ...was a breeze. And everyone ...worked with him said the ...ng.

I met for was a Jordan like me... never intimidating. He would ...comfortable while talking to ...have he was respected by his ...ll critics and by people of all ...

...not only talented, he was ...him. He valued his family ...His son also like a father and ...to aspiring rappers, but what ...admire him the most was his ...the country. Through his ...smiles and his interviews (like ...me he had with Wyclef Jean), ...of our kind that he was proud ...

...y Time I saw him was October ...at "Eat Bulaga!," during his ...cancer-stricken being diagnosed ...with leukemia. He was scheduled to do a number with Pupil, whose frontman Ely Buendia would also perform. In the first dress after the first frontheads concert. We could see in his eyes how he suffered so much, but the Ellen that I knew, the Ellen that most people know, still remained.

Like many who have been touched by his warmth and talent, I was shocked and surprised that a great idol and a great person like him was already gone. He was a loss to us; today's close needs role models like him.

He is in a better place right now and his memories, his songs and his personality will forever be etched in people's hearts and minds, myself included.

The author works for Iloop BMG.

Confessions of a fan

By Pam Pastor

I WAS A FAN. I still is FAN.

A big fan. So big that many years ago, when my cousins and I were preparing to entertain the guests at our grandmother's party, one of the songs on our playlist was "Mga Kababayan Ko."

More years later, when I was in high school, Francis Magalona released his "Bikers Among Ants" album and I remembered the whole thing. I even bought the album cover so solved. It wasn't just that rap was cool—his music was rife with social commentary.

Even more years later, I tried to convince my band to cover "Kaleidoscope World." I love that song so much. We still haven't, but that didn't stop our guitarists from doing his solo cover of "Cold Summer Nights."

The truth is, I could have met Francis if I wanted to. I had many chances. He had been featured in my newspaper section. He had an office in my family's building where I live. I met Pia because we were both part of a group of women who collected Hanes. Francis would join Pia sometimes when the group would have dinner—but I was never there.

Still, I didn't feel the need to rush. I always thought it would happen somehow, that one day I'll meet him and tell him what his music meant to me.

I always thought there would be time.

But there wasn't.

Now, as I write this, my uncle, who lives just one floor above me, just arrived from Francis M's wake. Tomorrow, he will be singing at the mass for Francis. Two floors above me are people working on a video tribute that will be played at the wake.

There are people who are grieving now—much more than I am. I am sure, because they did not just lose a hero, they lost a friend. They are lucky, much luckier than I am, because they got to know Francis M on the personal and offit, so we lose and is a real person.

Rest in peace, Francis M.

'Eto na ang mga nanalo sa First Raffle Draw ng

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Birthday Party Raffle Promo

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Kid's Party

Raffle Promo runs from January 11 to April 12, 2009. Kaya g sendin ka going mamolin ka sa nearing Grocer. Sa bus 10 ka sa at submit sa inner!

Asian resto doubles as a bar

Text and photos by Mae Quirino

A FEW WEEKS AGO, MY AC maintenance arrived from out of town. Friends from the neighborhood decided to take her out and show her the slightly around the South (i.e. the Strip on Jupiter called BF).

Proper, the organizer, mentioned hitting a bar along Aguirre Avenue called Yue Dining myself for being familiar with most of the establishments in my area, I was a bit disturbed that I've never even heard of this new place.

The first thing I noticed about the place was the decor: red walls, Asian-inspired dining-inspired furniture—a bit opaque for where it was located. The gang stayed at the foyer which was open-air, perfect for those who smoked.

Aside from the former overhanged, there was really nothing republican about Yue, at least until the bar (how ordinary). Someone had ordered black calamares (fried black because it was fried in ice ink) and cheese sticks. As I gulped some food down with my beer, I thought to myself that I should come back to try more of the food.

But forward a few days after, I decided to go back, and it was during this visit that I realized that more than a bar, Yue (actually Asian Tavern) is really a restaurant.

The food was predominantly Thai, though there were some Pinoy dishes thrown in for balance. I had to try the Tom Yum Goong (perfect!), Chicken Pandan (definitely flavored though a bit unevenly cooked), Bagoong Rice (yummy—it killed my stomach class), and the Crunchy Thai (surprisingly not crunchy).

After chowing with the staff and the young owners, I discovered that despite being only five months old, Yue was already earning a loyal following with foodies and night owls.

They asked me to visit their Ortigas nights on Wednesdays, a DJ spins; on Thursdays, it's Acoustic Nights. The owners plan to have Chill Nights on Mondays and Tuesdays, and on dates Dalton Mondays.

Hello, you say? I can't wait!

Yue Menu / Yue Asian Tavern Restaurant

Address : 197 Aguirre Ave., BF Homes, Paranaque

Contact Number : 820-9433

Hours : Opens at 6 p.m., closes at 3 a.m.

Appetizers : Chili Cheese Sticks, P169; Chili Chicken Wings, P179; Yue Yum Goong, P165; Calamares a la Aguirre, P180; Crunchy Catfish Salad, P333; Tauro's Chicken Pandan, P115; Ensaimada Dory with Mango Salsa, P195; Thai Bagoong Rice, P120; Beef, P55/Sets, P80; Shabu Beef, P65/PAD; Siomai Combinado, P96; Johnnie Black, P128 per shot/P1600 per bottle; Tito's Concoctions (by the pitcher): Bloody Orient, Blanket Peach, Serenity Sunset, Hellraiser Beer, Caliente Blow, P300

Secondhand Serenade

Sings the Sweetest Serenade at the Ayala Malls

The leading shopping and dining destination Ayala Malls gives every shopper a chance to experience a wide selection of retail and food offerings, convenient mall amenities and world-class events. As the premier entertainment destination, Ayala Malls lets everyone get the love-mall feeling once again as heartwarming tunes from popular acoustic rock sensation Secondhand Serenade performs live at the Ayala Malls!

An Armenian acoustic rock project fronted by vocalist and guitarist John Vesely, Secondhand Serenade began in Illinois, USA, in 2004 and released two studio albums Awake in 2007 and A Twist in My Story in 2008. After much hear about his popular music, he garnered over 20 million views in Youtube and became the number one artist on Myspace. John Vesely grew up with a musical family at San Francisco Bay Area. Starting off as a bassist for local bands for several years, he suddenly realized his potential to play on acoustic guitar and began to write his own songs. Secondhand Serenade was actually formed as a reference to the way in which his songs are 'serenades' sung to his wife Breanna Russell.

Recognized worldwide for his heart-on-sleeve, chest-tapping single "Fall for You" and the latest hit "Your Call" from his much talked about album, A Twist In My Story. Secondhand Serenade adds his signature raw vocals and guitar with the use of orchestration and a full band powered by ten industry heavyweight producers, Danny Lohner (Nine Inch Nails and Angels & Airwaves) and Butch Walker (Fall Out Boy and All-American Rejects).

Secondhand Serenade's latest album A Twist in My Story leads off with "Like A Knife" with a tone immediately apt for what is a heartfelt body of work complete with strings, signature harmonies, and lyrics conveyed with honest emotion. The Butch Walker-produced ballad "Fall For You" follows, which is one of many tracks featuring John on the piano. The remaining tracks are of a mixed sort with songs like "Stranger," "Maybe," and the up-tempo "Supposed" benefiting from the sounds of a full band, while others like "Why," "Goodbye," and the album's title track all prove to be just as effective in their stripped-down form.

All in all, Secondhand Serenade is to please his supporters, whom his roles have helped him to reach this point in his life. He claims, "Nothing in my career would be possible without my fans backing me. They are the most important people in terms of any success I have or will ever have." It is for this reason that he considers himself in keeping a personal connection with fans both on line and at performances.

Get into the new chapter of Secondhand Serenade's life with his latest album A Twist In My Story as it takes you through the highs and lows of love and life. Truly, John Vesely is a modern day storyteller following a path all his own while putting a new twist on his timeless tale.

Fall for Secondhand Serenade as it serenades Manila. Catch their live at the Ayala Malls on Saturday, March 28 at Greenbelt 5 Park.

Sunday, March 29 at the Trinoma Activity Center and Monday, March 30 at Ayala Center Cebu, Secondhand Serenade live in Manila is brought to you by the Ayala Malls, Warner Music Philippines, One White Tee with Grupo Real Estate, MYX the official music channel, Jam 88.3, Magic 89.9, 98.5FM, 103.5 Max FM and 90.7. For more on Secondhand Serenade log on to www.myspace.com/secondhandserenade. Get their HILL FOR YOU Ringback Tone for your Mobile Phone! Text TELL 61 to 2728 for Smart, or VN177 to 2332 for Globe, or GETSONG 5350088 to 2727 for Sun Subscribers.

Super 10

LIFESTYLE

Fireworks, confetti, instant souvenirs — it was a night we won't forget

greatest moments of Eraserheads' Final Set

By Pam Pastor
Photos by JM Lopez

IT WASN'T A GOOD-BUT-SUCKY it was pretty damn close.

After failed attempts by the audience to cajole the members of Eraserheads into doing an encore, Ely Buendia (told the crowd, "Bitin ayoko!"), Pio Raymund Marcaida, Marcus Adoro and Buddy Zabala (and the Schyzosonic Jazz Machine) walked to the front of the stage, put their arms around one another and took a bow.

It was just one of the great moments of the Eraserheads concert last Saturday.

The others:

9 Souvenirs for the crowd. Bling-bling went home with souvenirs: The boys threw all sorts of stuff to their supportive fans—water bottles, picks, drumsticks, even Ely's shoes. He was poised to throw his socks, which made everyone laugh. He didn't. Ely also gave away his jacket, which, to the horror of countless fans online, was promptly cut up by fan-ati people who caught it, so each of them could take home a piece. One crew member joined the fun—after the concert, he hauled all the sound dry ice machines of lighter fluid. He used 'em to lit up the piano. And people actually caught it.

8 Marcus singing a reggae version of "Hesang Isla Nang Isaisang," to the delight of the crowd. Raymund listening Jazz take over the drums so he could sing " Silo Ako," "Alkohol" and "Insomnia." It was funny to watch the crowd react every time Raymund hesitantly approached Ely (of course, the whole world knows who's Rocky finally going to be the crowd's request) to take over the mic now, by singing one lines from "Fine Time"—"I don't care if we sleep all day/Kasa kayakap ka ng aking." The bloody outer space playlist this time—it became clear they were more relaxed in this concert than in the previous reunion. They were actually having fun.

It's always been said that the Eraserheads aren't hyper-connecting with the audience and talking to the crowd, but not this time.

7 The solo set. After the first break, the boys emerged onstage in more intimate setup, with Ely sitting on a couch and the others wielding acoustic instruments. That part of the concert felt so intimate—strange, given the crowd that numbered a hundred thousand. That kind of moment, it didn't feel like we were in a huge concert venue; it felt like we were in a small bar watching our favorite band. Ely deadpanned, "If you have any requests, pabitapat sa waiter."

6 Ely singing this word "—ma" when they played "Ang Huling El Bimbo." I don't think a cuss word has received that much applause, ever. When a guy shouted, "I love you, Ely!" Ely replied, "I love you too, bro," not bent missing a beat.

5 The insane fireworks of "Ebeneezer." They came in such a surprise that some people in front naturally ducked.

4 The crowd singing "Ang Huling El Bimbo" while waiting for the Eraserheads to go onstage again. That was a goosebump moment.

3 The tribute to Francis M. On the day of the concert, people were still trying to come to grips with the news of Francis Magalona's death. He had been due to perform on the concert. The Eraserheads presented a tribute instead. "Kung saan-saan pa tayo kay Francis!" Ely said. The crowd broke into a deafening chant, "Francis Francis!"

Raymund held up a sign that read, "Buck Ed Salutes The Man From Manila." The band played "Superproud" and "Kahitsa unspa Bicol," with Ely rapping, instead of Francis. Many people online have written that the teleprompter set up in front of the stage must have been a big help when Ely had to say "Superproud." Truth is, the lyrics of the rap were not on the teleprompter. No, Ely knows them by heart.

2 The beaming of the piano. There was a confirm moment when the Eraserheads finally played "Ang Huling El Bimbo" but there was a bigger thing happening on stage. Before a shocked audience, Ely set the "Sticker Happy" piano on fire. It was Ely's old piano which had been at "Yo Homes for a long time, the piano featured on the "Sticker Happy" album cover. "We actually wanted to use the piano para sa isa pa. I don't know if it was too expensive to repair or we just didn't have enough time," Raymund said. But he knew Ely wanted him to? "Di kinda-sure, nkaod it as a joke. Di really wanted the piano onstage. But I guess he knew he'd do it; he had lighter fluid."

1 Prime for the road. The Eraserheads had done an encore, the show was over, or so everyone thought. People started to spill out of the concert grounds, the crew took over the stage and started packing up.

But then, Raymund returned and said, "Gusto nyo pa ba?"

The crowd went wild. "Sawa gyo tayo si Ely!" "Iyongyo tayo si Marcus!"

Soon, the four were back on stage, standing in a circle. Ely asked the crowd, "Kaya nkaya pa ba?" Everyone was still going wild. "Okay. Three for the road," he said. They played "Ligaya," "Ebeneezer" and "Toyang."

Ely finally left his comfort zone behind the mic stand and actually went down to the crowd, making people sing parts of Toyang. Asked later why they decided to play more songs, Raymund said, "Sobrang saya pa kami sa finale!" Gusto ko pa ng ganoong energy eh!"

The extra songs may have been unplanned (and unfortunately lost they did not come as surprise).

Apparently, in the last rehearsals, Ely said, "Ang hirap nyan (singles, edit-ibeses lang tayo."

The cost of the show seemed to be much with the crowd: not just become they played their well-loved songs, but also because it gave fans hope that maybe, just maybe, like the first, the Eraserheads didn't want the night to end.

ICONIC Fans at an unforgettable night

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A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

Get fit and healthy this summer at The Richmonde Hotel

THESE DAYS, ACHIEVING THE BEST quality of life is on top of everyone's list: emotional well-being, family relations and financial stability. And to accomplish all these, it is but natural to start with one's physical health.

To help you jump start on your physical fitness regimen, The Richmonde Hotel's Health Club presents once again the Summer Club which allows you one only to try out the gym's facilities and services, but also marvel at your progress in just a limited time with the added incentive of getting fit during the swimsuit season! For a membership fee of only P5,000.00, you get to enjoy the Health Club's first class facilities and professional services from March 15 to June 15, Mondays to Fridays, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Members of the Summer Club will not only get to utilize the Health Club's modern gym equipment, heated indoor pool, full serviced locker rooms and steam/sauna rooms, but they will also be entitled to numerous made-to-

measure programs designed by professional trainers specifically for the needs of each member so as to ensure results.

Also for a limited period, the Health Club offers as much as 12 percent discount on the regular membership fees if you apply from March 1 to April 30.

For more information call 889-8447. The Health Club is located at the 4th floor of The Richmonde Hotel at 21 San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

A taste of summer at Microtel Hotels & Resorts

PLAN YOUR VACATION EARLY! Check out Microtel Hotels and Resorts' summer treats at prime destinations all over the country.

Each day of fun and relaxation is guaranteed with Microtel Mimosa's own conducive rooms and ample facilities and amenities that include a beautiful beachfront, infinity pool, beach bar and restaurant. Get a room for as low as P3,750 per night of your choice of breakfast, good for 2. And if you stay for a minimum of 2 nights, get 18 percent discount on your second night.

Bask under the sun and enjoy the crystal blue waters of Boracay beach. A great vacation awaits at Microtel Boracay with its summer offer of P4,500 per night inclusive of breakfast, good for 2 persons. Have a fun-filled holiday and a relaxing retreat away from the crowd. Just like at Mimosa, guests may also arrange for island hopping, jet-skiing, parasailing and other aqua sports.

The newest Microtel is also the city's first beachside hotel ideally located at Elmwood Plaza, only a few minutes drive from the airport and city centre. Enjoy a stunning view of the sea and the mountains of Bohol from the hotel's restaurant and bar as introductory rate of P3,800 per night inclusive of breakfast and airport transfers, good for 2 persons.

For bookings and reservations, call 687-5171 or 0917-5207171, e-mail microtel@sterlingholdings.ph or log on to www.microtelphilippines.com.

Summer frolic at Apple Tree Resort and Hotel

LUCENA IN DIPOL, MISAMIS ORIENTAL, and just 10 minutes away from Cagayan de Oro City, Apple Tree Resort and Hotel boasts of a beach front to overlook the majestic views of Macajalar Bay and Camiguin Island. One can luxuriate in privacy in deluxe guestrooms fronting an inviting pool with lavaret amidst a well-groomed foliage.

Top of mind for recreation are the aqua sports such as kayaking, jet ski with banana boat, snorkeling and diving in the fair waters. Experience Open Low Agusanyong Island. One can also go for the Macahambus adventure activities like the popular river rafting, the Sky Bridge or Zip Line.

For nearby tours, visit a stonework pottery, an artistry, the metals and ironcrafts farms as well as the dairy farms and the Del Monte Banana Farms in El Salvador. Or enjoy the sights of the bustling city of Cagayan de Oro City with its museums, shopping centers, restaurants and bars. Famous delicacies like pastel and cheese sticks can be found in food centers around the city.

This summer, enjoy a 10 percent discount on any type of room reservation. For a room booking of two or more, 15 percent discount will be extended on all rooms. This is inclusive of breakfast for single or double occupancy. For inquiries, contact (088)222-7545/25, 754-0328 or 305-1980.

Intercontinental to raffle off weekend stays

DINE AT INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA'S RESTAURANTS FROM MARCH 1 to April 30 and get a chance to win weekend accommodations at its sister hotels: InterContinental Singapore, Crowne Plaza Manila, Holiday Inn Suites and Holiday Inn Clark. A minimum total food bill of P10,000 will entitle you to a raffle ticket for a chance to win a weekend stay (2 days/2 nights) for two at the beautiful InterContinental Singapore inclusive of round trip plane tickets while a minimum total food bill of P5,000 earns you one raffle ticket for a weekend overnight stay for two at holiday Inn Clark. Holiday Inn Suites Manila in Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria will be on May 4. The hotel has 4 restaurant outlets namely Prince Albert Rotisserie; Café Segovia/ Gerontimos Bar; and the Sol Y Sombra poolside restaurant. Call 793-7000 for information and reservations.

All hail the Alaskan King Crab

CELEBRATE AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY FOR A TREAT AS THE FIREPLACE GRILLS OUT its fresh Catch of the Day, huge Alaskan King Crab. Sought after for its rich, tasty meat and succulent meat, this giant of the North Pacific is without doubt a delicacy for a limited time only. The Fireplace is offering traditional Alaskan King Crab feasts, such as Crab Cocktail, North American Crab Chowder and Crab Cakes, as well as each culinary-forward dishes as Home-made Alaskan Crab Ravioli. These Alaskan King Crab delights are best shared with friends with a bottle of white wine. So, give in to your desires and make a reservation today to sample the scrumptious fare of Cocobocanas. The Fireplace is located on Level 5 of Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila. For more information or to make a reservation, please call 246-1234.

Marco Polo re-launch website with a new look

MARCO POLO DAVAO IS DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THAT ITS WEBSITE has officially re-launched last week with a brand new look and style. The contemporary design and the use of real imagery now convey the Marco Polo Experience that is inspiring, luxurious and welcoming. It was deemed that how best to introduce to the website is the hotel virtual photo tours. Guests can now view this serene yet facilities in 360 degree, enjoying a virtual experience with the hotels prior to their arrival. The new website has been redesigned to more user-friendly and easier to navigate, which makes online hotel bookings more efficient and convenient. Simply visit www.marcopolohotels.com and experience the new era of Marco Polo.

Provincial Hotels Directory

15 greatest moments backstage

By Gang Bisley

WHEN YOU LIVE AN ALL-access pass, you get to see some events backstage that will otherwise go unnoticed. Moments like:

1. Getting to offer motorbike chairs to the moms of Buddy and Raymund while they stood in the sidelines, cos I think bringing moms to concerts is always a memorable thing. The passing of Ely's mom crossed my mind, too, and I felt terribly sad. But if you believe in heaven, you'll know that she got the best seat and view in the house anyway.

2. Seeing Raymund peek inside Ely's tent to hand him an Eraserheads T-shirt. He said, "Ely, pare kay Ilan." He showed the shirt to his son Ilan and said, "Ilan, look, it's yours." And they all smiled.

3. Hanging out with the Eraserheads. All their children are funny and hyper and bear of all, oblivious to the fuss about their dads. Nido asked Buddy once, "Daddy, are you famous?"

5. Getting to see the Sandwich play support team to Jazz Nicholas. I always like watching bands who loyally support each other.

6. Seeing Ely strong and beautiful woman who now no backbones for this fraternity of four. Sisters, cousins, Author Isabou, all present lending the most backing-chair-only women ano effin.

7. Getting to eat Raymund's dinner from a cupperware with his name tag spelled on it.

8. Seeing the semi-hunky and standard piano-man Ely used to ogle.

9. Seeing Buddy weave in and out of all the rows, I imagine in compromise his hairdresser for a set well done in between the first and second parts. Peace, man.

10. Seeing all three roadies and Jaxx officemet they were told how they mattered so candidly and mushroomishly. It's such an art form, *Mahalnar ang mga roadies!*

11. Witnessing Ray mund roaming up on his drum practice pads a few minutes before the show, but stopping when his daughter Anne couldn't open her bottle of orange juice to open it for her.

12. Jon taking a nap on the couch inside Ely's tent while everyone famed.

13. Buddy's daughter Nido not wearing Die Hoods shirt This Ray mund gave her. When he asked why Raymund's daughter Anne replied promptly, "It doesn't match her skirt, Daddy!"

14. Seeing close friends of the band all present and hanging just to fortify Ely, Raymund, Buddy and Mercedes' wife to finish the set off and be grace fully done with it.

15. Witnessing the four having fun. It's always beautiful to see the Friends having fun and taking a hundred fans and people along with them.

A night that won't...

Pinoyrap p24

Marcus Adoro Lead guitarist

Fans were in full force in the 'Final Set,' what can you say about it?

The show of support was overwhelming. Of course, you can't also deny the fact that they were down because it was supposed to be the last. Nevertheless we are really thankful. Salamat talaga.

Raymund talked us to call you when the three of them were on stage for the encore and we were chanting "Marcus! Marcus!" when were you there and did you really hear us?

I was outside Bistro Kitty guitar got our attention. **Tell us about it.**

I bought it somewhere in Galleria. I just got to have that cute guitar and my intention was to use it for the pushism of our members which were "Jasmica," "Blissful" and "Sik Mo"—the song had a little cute intro. Sayang nga wala pang box. The chromatic Pitch Processor Boss, by the way, I only use it for very special occasions. It's just fun to have it around and it's nice to look at.

Which is the most unforgettable part of the gig for you?

It has to be when Ely doused the "Sticker Singey" piano with lighter fluid during the end part of "El Bimbo," setting it after and scooping on it till it shattered into pieces. There was a missed reaction so it as kinukuha. Love it.

Sus wears saying something to Ely while he was doing that.

I kept screaming at Ely to let go of the lighter fluid because the plastic container already caught fire and it's just a matter of time before it explodes. He was holding it above his head and I was under the impression that he couldn't see it while it was burning. I guess I was wrong.

More "Magnapi" no doubt and was about to hit the exit, but then you guys gave an encore.

Oh, it was a semi-planned thing in a way na nobody knew which song we were playing except for Ely. So there was a little kalo-kaloan on our part. Gladly he picked songs from the last gig so that was a relief.

You sang a reggae version of "Making A Scene" to the delight of the crowd, most of which heard you sing for the first time. Were you nervous?

I wasn't nervous at all. I do that version all the time with Sticker Highway as a nod to Ely and the Heads' legacy. It never fails to give good vibes to all. That was part of the surprise numbers as they so kindly say. It worked, hehehe!

Do you have any idea what Sup posed to be 10 hours who were cast in the "Sing Hallog 10 Hindot" music video?

The "Hallog O Hindot" kuh are now bitanz as per my last conversation with director Antonio Soliva.

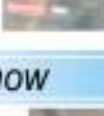
How are you with the rest of the bands?

We're good. We spent some moments on the board the day after the concert.

We heard you were with Marcus and Raymund after the gig.

We were invited for an after party at the house of Jon Buddy's. "Awaken" and another one in Sagada. I guess both to my thanks to people have some pictures taken, clutched and wined down. Then I ordered breakfast at 4 a.m. and went to deep plot.

Jazz Nicholas Sessionist



How different was this concert compared with the first gig?

More relaxed, true fun, more comfortable. Although may times na nahihiya pa rin ako. Ha yung kaya pag nagsimula sobra-libre.

Which was the most poignant part of the gig for you?

Kapag nag-usap usap sila, especially Raymund and Ely makakatulig!

"We've heard you've a big E'lmendo fan!" (ahem) Mapakakatulig impluwensiyan niko sa kin. They encouraged me [Bulletproof] to do our own originals. Glo [Buddy and Raymund] on [our recent producers name (Jet "Sweetnotes Show"].

Did you plans what you weave for the gig?

Do normal!

Buddy indirectly called it a "night of love." Is love season raving lahat si "Hindot.

Tours, Leisure & Chow

Discovering comfort in the heart of Manila

AS PART OF ITS COMMITMENT OF providing best value rates to its guests, City Garden Suites issues rates were made affordable despite the skyrocketing prices of hotels in Manila. Starting at P2,000, one may enjoy a relaxing stay at its exquisitely furnished rooms, which comes with free breakfast buffet for two. All rooms are equipped with cool bar, safety deposit box, complimentary newspaper, wireless Internet access and others.

For people who like great food and nice ambiance, the City Garden Suites' Cafe Manila Restaurant is the ideal place to go and share wonderful moments. Daily buffet breakfast is available for P375 net from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m.

In addition, City Garden Suites - Manila the "SG Dynamite Celebration" venue also upgraded its function rooms to be more sophisticated and make it attuned to the current international trends. Complete and hassle-free party packages for wedding, baptismal, debut, kiddy party, etc are being offered at very reasonable rates.

City Garden Suites - Manila is conveniently located at 1358 A. Mabini St., Ermita, Manila. For inquiries and reservations, contact (632) 336-3432 or e-mail reservations@cgardensuites.com.

Eat your heart out at Waterfront Pavilion

FOOD, SOME PEOPLE SAY, IS the most primitive form of comfort. Shoulder of this, the Waterfront Pavilion Hotel and Casino has prepared not just one but three mouth-watering buffets that are sure to tick all the spots that matter.

Delight in a wide array of hot and sizzling meats and seafood with Seasons's (BBQ Buffet for only P950 net per person. Seasons is open from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. everyday, to give you the best gastronomic experience ever.

Those craving for true flavors of Asian flavor can find refuge at Penny Garden, with their Dim Sum Lunch Promo for only P600 net per head. Penny Garden opens its doors for lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., and dinner from 6 to 10:30 p.m.

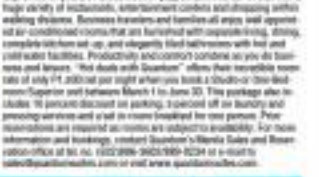
Some people say that noodles hold the secret to long life. Enjoy a blissful trip to ever after with the Heavenly's Mini Hotpot Buffet.

The only P388 net per person, enjoy one heaping plate after another of prime pasta, paired with only the most flavorful sauces. The Patisserie serves light snacks, all-day breakfast fare, and a whole lot more except for lunch and dinner, 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

For inquiries and reservations, call (632)526-1212 or visit www.waterfrontmanila.com.ph.

JAPAN'S BEST JAZZ ARTIST ARRIVE IN MANILA

Known for her colorful, boutique, energetic live performances and blend of musical genre such as jazz, progressive rock, and classical compositions, Hiromi Uehara and her band Sonic Bloom is one of Japan's prizes. She first hits the country for jazz festival, a concert produced by ABS-CBN's Cable Channel Five Media Group (CCFMG) which featured some of the most internationally-renowned and multi-awarded jazz artists who made their Metro Opera House debut Dianne Reeves. Uehara represented the jazz community during her performance at the Eastwood Fest last March 7. Photo shows Hiromi Uehara (second from left) and her band Sonic Bloom com posed of her husband Anthony Jackson (leg, drummer Marcus Gilmore and guitarist Denny Seiwell) while being welcomed upon their arrival at Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Hiromi's Sonic Bloom will be their official residence artist in Manila.



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A night that won't be erased from memory

'Hindi naman kami show biz. 'Yung mga drama namin amin-amin na lang 'yun.'- Raymund Marasigan

Ivan Andrea C. Perez
Photos by Jil Lajos

IT WAS A NIGHT OF love. They asked us to sing along, and we did, since we knew the songs by heart. They asked us to wave our hands, and we raised them in the air. Asked for a group hug, they said we should do it first. "Kaya mauna," Fly told us. And we could have given just that if these weren't a hundred thousand people in the gig of the one Pinoy band that mattered.

Yeah, I'm talking about The Final Set," March 7, ALAB SM Mall of Asia was the gig of all gigs.

It has been rumored to perfection—phenomenal, massive, insense, hardcore. A week has passed and we're still on over it.

Inquirer Super talks to Dave Verallo—Raymund Marasigan, Buddy Zabala and Marcus Adoro—and Rommel Ynzal—Jaye Nicholas of Ivoxmotion. Those we know you still can't get enough of the Philippines' Fab Four, have story—or at least, most of them—in their own words:

E-mail the author at iperez@inquirer.com.ph

Raymund Marasigan Drummer

What was the first thing in your mind when you saw the extreme number of people?

I was going around backstage pa lang. Manalo! The crowd was banging dials. It's the biggest show I've played.

What made you guys do the house three songs, "Ligaya," "Sembreak" and "Buying"?

A few things. Kaya po namin c. dito, personally, bitin pa. We wanted to give more. Gusto pa naming magligay. We were just glad to finish the show. Nagpaalam-amin nervin before na baka hindi tigilan (ng crowd).

Was it some sort of a secret playlist?

Not really, we discussed right there and when on stage what to play. [We chose those songs because] yun 'yung maalala.

Which was your favorite part in the gig?

First song pa lang! Then "El Bimbo," destroying the piano. I love "Ligaya."

Some fans pinpointed mistakes online, but that we mind.

Eh, there were mistakes. Alaskaning no-hold back so we could push na talaga. Pero were trying to pace it. Nagpapalipas na rin minsan and getting reasons that we were having fun and trying not to get distracted with technical glitches.

Were you nervous?

I wasn't nervous. But sometimes becomes you know you're being recorded and videoed, and you're playing in front of family and friends.

Was the booming of the "Wicker Happy" piano part of the plan?

I've heard that Ely Buendia, Eraserheads vocalist wasn't to-do that. Kasi may mga eksena lan nanood si sa kind nagsisilt ngod. Belonging to the "Wicker Happy" piano was supposed to be in the line down Neung umalis si Ely sa Teacher's Village, nalipat lan sa 70's bistro, it has been there for over.

How did you find about it?

Dance moves the years.

The acoustic set was really refreshing and surprising, we loved it!

Someone suggested pushing it for the second set. We were asked to do 25 songs under rainbow.

We noticed you were wearing a Team Manila shirt in various colors while you were playing.

I'm set lan was printed on the back. Team 'yun eh! Released before the gig but are being sold now.

What's your plan after the "Final Set"?

Back in playing with Sandwich, Pedicab and Cambio. I have a band called Ganjiz, we have a Japanese drummer and an American singer. I'm also producing for The Dawn, Frisbee Points and Wong Commotion.

Where were you after the gig?

We were in the house and MTV after party gig at 7 Decades, then we hung out at Impakto (in Makati) with friends. We were too tired to play Fly, I think, stayed in the hotel to rest.

The crowd clamored for a group hug, are thoughts on'd (finally) on it.

"If nervous down done the (laughs). 'It So edit or Fly "Kaya mauna?" If you guys group hug total strangers, siguro we might have done that. Si namin kami magsiliwan as group hug rituals, memorable eh-hehe (laughs).

How's your relationship compared to the rest of the Heads?

Civil. Modern co- kinning pinalagan. But better because even sc rehearsals it was less tense. Si Buddy naman kalmado ko c Jonh Cassidol, so I see him almost every day. Yung mga drama namin amin-amin na lang 'yun.

Buddy Zabala Bassist

What was running in your head when you got up on stage and saw the throng of people?

Manalo. I was looking at the sea of people and I can't see where it ends.

Paladin na kami sa'n and we were surprised when you did an unexpected encore.

You know that rule in "Save the crowd roaming for more?" Pde broke that rule, we're gone back and did more.

When you guys bowed on stage, we really thought you were going to do a group hug.

That's what I wanted to make sana. We're not exactly the group hug kind of band. Can you imagine some band like Gloc-9ing that? People who say that don't know us enough. We singing would never be enough. We singing would never be enough. The set will never be enough.

Three more songs will never be enough. It's the succession. It's the nostalgia that makes people ask for more. We fell in love with that kind of thing.

Was the acoustic set done to give Ely some rest?

We'll win a consensus effort ever just for Ely but also for the band to get some rest. Kaya c ka kumanta si Raymund and Marcus.

We were chanting "Buddy! Buddy!" during those so long [song] kind [encore] kasi.

Kawawala naman ako eh! (pertaining to a few times he sang encore)

Didn't feel you deserve it?

Dapat kakanta ako ng "Sana Ika" from the "Static 97" album but it couldn't find its way in the set list.

How different were you guys in the "Final Set" from the first reunion gig?

Generally we're better on stage. This time there was less tension. Mas may team effort and we did our best as individuals.

We noticed the band made some mistakes during the show.

That's how the Heads have always been. But it was less tense.

How were you right after the event?

I had to kick back, "decompress." I was with Raymund and other friends from Monday.

What's your plans after this big gig?

The Dawn has a new album. I'm producing for Glenn Sanares and Sugarfree.

So how are you guys now? Do you see yourself hanging out and stuff?

You know that's a good question. It's like how we have left off don't even was relaxed. There are no expectations. We're talking to each other.

So that means you guys got more matters?

Still, we're cities like seeing unanswered questions but as you go older you just let it go.

Young entrepreneurs

By Sandie B. Gadia

ONE DOESN'T NECESSARILY have to be a graduate in order to start up a business. All one needs is the right blend of ingenuity, entrepreneurial skills, and passion.

The Ateneo de Manila University provides its students with an avenue to do just that. SoBBA—School of Management Business Accelerator Program—offers students adequate knowledge and experience on entrepreneurship by allowing them to set up their own business ventures.

Parents-your students behind SoBBA brands Palms Baklava, GoldFingers, Beckett and Berries, Southern Sun and BOOSTiV are taking a step up by seeking to expand their businesses after graduation.

They started early

Palms Baklava

Communication Technology Management seniors Karissa Herrera, Liana Arellano, Jacqueline Uy Jayoma Sarilla and Jon Gonzalves are the students behind Palms Baklava. "We have the same goal to

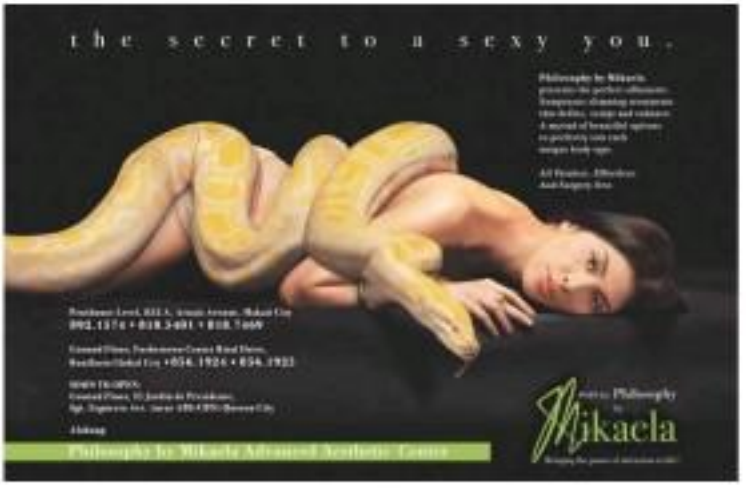
READ MORE ON

Art at Park today

SALCEDO VILLAGE IN MAKATI IS THE happening place today as "Art in the Park" and "Art after Dark" are held starting 8 a.m. at Jaime Velasquez Park (near Makati Sports Club), Salcedo Village, Makati.

The art fair, organized by Museum Foundation of the Philippines with Barangay Bel-Air and Security Bank MasterCard, will have 24 booths of paintings, sculptures, photographs and prints. Prices of artworks will not go beyond P20,000. The sale will be from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

From 7-10 p.m. is "Art after Dark" featuring jazz music, seven curated spaces of select galleries and installation artists Ibra Camacho and Joel Mendoza. Both groups can also enjoy the special dishes the Salcedo market fair hosts, known for, especially paella.



CROWNASIA
A Vista Land Company

GARFIELD — By Jim Davis

A. LIPIN — By JOEL ABRIA

FUSAO BARDY — By IRIL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEKNOTS — By ELIZABETH CHOMICKI

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY — By STEVEN PABALINAS

BABY BLUES — By JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WENDY — By LIRA GARCELLANO

TULDOK — By MARA COLI

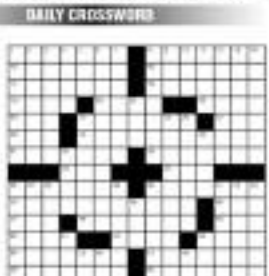
KISO MACHINE — By MANG ABRERA

MEN — By DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Dave Pruzan
Chicago, IL

3/14/09



ACROSS
1 Monetary reference
8 Lyric "across the heavens"
14 Jimmy Fallon's Late Night hour
15 Small body
16 Deadlock
17 Cinderella
18 Cameras
20 Include 2:47 in news
22 Part of IRA
23 Bureau of Engraving
24 Surrounding themselves
27 Prosecutor Ken or Scott
28 Sports magazine
29 Working in synchronization
31 Conservatives' opposite in Portland, Oregon
34 Ate hungrily
36 Bundle of sticks
37 Sun. observances
38 Nonsense nonrepresentation
40 Like many Chinese meals
44 Explorer Amundsen
45 Signing in (to)
46 Indian carnivore
47 Chocolate-and-cheese
48 Lyric Hammerstein II
50 Particular
52 Lower from on high
55 Tree-trimmer
56 Nineteenth Amendment letters
57 Responsible remarks on reading
58 Nerve
59 Pioneer news reporting
60 Lyrics
61 Well-seen in Arab

DOWN
1 Tapering points
2 Drink for reminiscing
3 Wondered
4 Shopping in Soho
5 Work weeks?
6 "Cheers" co-star
7 Shady neighbors
8 Non-inspirational
9 Dutch commune
11 Nuclear-capable grass
12 Dutch town
13 "Are you serious?"
21 Looking quite
23 Foundlings
24 Classified ad abbrevs. (Abbr.)
25 Hard candy
26 Dolphin sanctuary
30 "Sesame Street" Muppet
32 Bad Bradley
33 Public cry
35 Rubber hose precursor
39 Shrubbery
41 Lifted a glass to
42 Tiny flock of dancers
43 Everlasting
49 "Alabama Jubilee" singer, 1915
51 Dance of Brazil
53 Wanna-be
54 Original song options

Friday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

FOUNDATION DAY: Even after the boom, and you know a paradox fit, the seeds of success. You're very accepting of whatever happens around you. You identify with great intelligence and especially, humility is a characteristic you like to see in others. Your birthday is a time of contemplation, but not without the proper amount of celebration. Your support of others. You're very interested. This year is full of exciting, fresh, new material.

BORN ON this day: Actor Brendan Fraser, playwright/screenwriter Billy Crystal, entertainer/actor Diana Ross, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Music is your self-love expression. Your self-love is your self-love activity for the six weeks. It could even be a period love of love.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): In the next month, you can be a positive influence on others with groups, clubs and organizations. Work with your friends to accomplish goals as a group not only boosts your confidence.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You work hard. A defensive, stressful move to the left is to eight hours. You deserve to work very hard to achieve something and make a name for yourself. Don't be afraid to do so. Be proud of your accomplishments.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have opportunities to meet or receive opportunities to participate in exciting, fun events. Your creativity, sensitivity and intuition are at an all-time high. Be sure to express yourself. Don't be afraid to do so. Be proud of your accomplishments.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Positive changes about property, inheritance and wills. Be sensitive to the needs of your loved ones. However, they don't have to happen instead you should just focus on your own needs.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Major stuff is happening. Your ego for the best as usual. You could have some harassment issues and you may have problems with those close to you. Be gentle and patient with others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your money and motivation is up. Your ego is also going to be fantastic. Some members may be. You want to know the everything and everything to be done right.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Plan on an exciting, exhilarating and exciting month. You have a lot of opportunities to carry obligations. You're having personal issues during the next month. You want to be loved.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You have an active month. You're involved in a lot of physical activity, love, romance or creative pursuits and/or children. You have a lot of personal work.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You have communication with others and business matters associated with you. You're involved in a lot of physical activity, love, romance or creative pursuits and/or children. You have a lot of personal work.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Make sure you are working hard to earn money. Be careful with your health. Workers be aware you need time to relax. You're having a lot of fun with your friends.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You've got lots of physical activity so do you. Lots of physical activity. Now is a good sign for the next six months giving you lots of fun and laugh.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu — By Dave Green

				2				
4		1	9		6	5		8
		5				7		
	4						2	
6			3		7			9
	8						7	
		3				1		
9		8	1		2	4		7
				9				

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	9	8	1	7	2	5	4	6
2	6	7	3	4	5	8	1	3
1	5	4	6	8	3	2	7	9
4	3	9	5	6	1	7	2	8
6	2	1	7	3	8	9	5	4
7	8	5	2	9	4	6	3	1
8	4	6	9	2	7	1	8	5
5	7	3	8	1	9	4	6	2
9	1	2	4	5	6	3	8	7

Beware their example

Learn from the mistakes of these young people

Nina Mark M. Sablan
ZBO Correspondent

LOOKING UP TO SOMEone—a parent, a teacher, a political figure, a movie star—is healthy because it makes an aspire to be a better person.

However, there are moments when those whom we idolize fail to meet our expectations and commit a mistake. How we take it—go blind about it, hate the idolized one from then on, or gain insight from it—is really what's more important.

Here are some headliners who have recently been in the news for some slip-ups. Read and reap.

Who: Chris Brown
Why he's famous: The recent Manila visitor is popular the world over for his hit R&B songs ("With You," "Superhuman," "Forever," "No. 1") and awesome dance moves. He is also the boyfriend of pop star Rihanna.
Don't do as he did: Brown reportedly assaulted Rihanna, resulting to the "Umbrella" singer having serious swelling and bruising, a split lip, a bloody nose and bite marks.
Punishment: Brown will no longer be involved in the "Got Milk?" ads. His ads for Doublemint have also been suspended. Other brands—not to mention a lot of person and young fans—have also been turned off. His violent actions may have possibly put an end to his career.
Lesson: A guy should never assault a woman, especially his girlfriend.

Who: Michael Phelps
Why he's famous: Apart from having won 14 Olympic medals, this American swimmer also holds world records in swimming. He is looked up to by a lot of young people as one of the world's greatest athletes.
Don't do as he did: He posed with a bong—a pipe used for smoking marijuana.
Punishment: He got a three-month suspension from the sport and also lost a big endorsement deal.
Lesson: Be careful when a camera is posing for photos and posting those photos anywhere. While there is not enough evidence that he smoked marijuana (so drug charges were filed against him), Phelps has said he realized what he did was a mistake, considering his status. "For young people especially, be careful about the decisions you make. One bad decision can really hurt you and the people you care about. I'm 23 years old, and despite the successes I've had in the pool, I never be a youthful and inexperience way, not in a manner people have come to expect from me. For this, I am sorry. I promise my fans and the public it will not happen again," he said.

Who: Alfie Patron
Why he's famous: He's a dad at 11 (although he was 13 when his daughter was born)
How's do as he did: He had sex...unprotected sex...at a very early age, when he's way prepared for it and its consequences.
Punishment: Having a kid isn't exactly a sentence—if you're not a kid yourself, that is. Patron, on more how positive he tries to look at the situation, will definitely have a hard time with his new role as father to newborn Mahie Francine (who looks more his mom than his daughter). He's not exactly getting fish (he looks on our not treasure) but his parents are.
Lesson: Don't have sex until you're very ready. And remember to use protection. Just look at what happened to Alfie and his girlfriend, Chantelle Steadman, who is 16.

E-mail the author at nine-marksablan@yahoo.com

Smells like tee spirit

TOP PICKS From Universe Store

By Bianca Consunji
ABS-CBN Correspondent

AS GRADUATION TIME draws closer, it's time to wear your heart on your sleeve—of your shirt, that is. While it's easier to buy school shirts (especially if you're from Ateneo or La Salle), last year's Adidas shirts and jackets were a big hit), try to look for tees that go beyond bold letters emblazoned on the front.

What we love about Universe Store is that they integrate school culture into their designs. Their first venture, a shirt published after the UP Blue Book (the official booklet used for courses), was such a hit, they came up with the same design in different colors—although technically, they aren't "Blue Book" shirts then.

"We got the idea of putting up the first rainbow shirts to create unique university-themed designs, mainly for University of the Philippines," says Bliss Asercion, who created the shirts along with friend David Arlan Angeles. "We played with the basic series of making simple but cool designs."

Meanwhile, "The Blue Book shirt was created because we wanted a shirt design that [would make] alumni and students remember all their triumphs as well as reliving from the examinations given to them by Blue Book (words can't describe professors while in the university)."

The success of the shirt, now a common sight on the different UP campuses, spurred a series of other UP-themed tees. Alumni browsing the UP campus will appreciate the "I Bet UP" shirt, which depicts the ubiquitous first-campus Jeep, while proud students can go to class wearing the "I survived" shirt.

Going to UP does not only mean being a UP "diehard," says Asercion. "Aside from our academic responsibilities, we have a task of learning not only for our own benefit, but also for our country and fellowmen. That task is well represented by our university's symbol, the Oblation."

Asercion adds, "The Oblation depicts a naked man having upraised calm outstretched arms; it symbolizes what we are, what we must be—only offering to our motherland. More than what it is found in others, the Oblation didn't tell us that we are of other races, and the edge our persons is changed, transform and revolutionized."

Visit http://universestore.multiply.com or call 0905-2251180.

Email the author at bianca.consunji@yahoo.com.

From page E1

like to be successful entrepreneurs," cautioning cool style manager Jon says.

"We discovered great potential where we have someone who can bake such a delicious product," he says. "[Since Goldilocks] is even popular in foreign countries, why not try and establish the product here?"

The Goldilocks story originated from the Middle East as Jon, Fiona, meanwhile, was derived from the Greek goddess of Luna.

"Once you try Goldilocks, you get addicted to its sweet taste," Jon says.

Basic Goldilocks packages sell for P250 for 10 pieces, and P400 for 20 pieces.

Check out their website at http://yourgoldilocks.com.

Goldfingers

Jaron Aseria, Ginjo Abella, Cokey Balisi and Fred Boque are the creators of Goldfingers.

"We wanted to turn Boneless Chips—a typical pinoy food product—into something that can compete with popcorn, cashew and fries we see in malls," Jaron, Ginjo, and Cokey say. "We wanted to do something out of the ordinary; who would come to think that this already sweet delicacy could be partnered up with chocolate?"

"We formed SOMBA because we wanted to apply what we've learned in school and essentially turn it into something more concrete," they say. "Ever since, we've been thinking about starting up our own businesses. Among the SOMBA programs, gave us an opportunity to turn those plans into reality."

Goldfingers is known for their dipped. Jaron, Ginjo—Jaron says chips in sexy flavors—that are sold for P30 to P40. They come in various flavors: Milk Chocolate, White Chocolate, Mallow Chocolate, Cinnamon Coconut (Buco Pandan), and a special Ampalaya flavored dip.

Visit http://goldfingers.ezo.com for more information on how you can become a dipper.

Buckets and Berries

Management Economics seniors Alex Guillen, Shenaz Panaguiton, Camille Aquino, Krishna Bay, Tricia Aquilino, Mira Tiongson, Shenela Dalusung and Klara del Rosario woke up the hour behind Buckets and Berries, a cuisine popular for ice cream shows.

"[Both]BA Ltd. a good opportunity to [improve] entrepreneurial classes," Shen says. "Being an entrepreneur isn't just about getting profits, it's about contributing something to society [by answering to] the needs of the market."

"The product is cuisine milk-based, so we wanted a name that can suggest that of delicious milk: berries, Buckets", she explains. "When we developed our business concept, we decided to include add-ons as part of our service, like choco Monster (a mixture of Dairy and Oreo)."

Buckets and Berries' cuisines popular ice cream costs P45 to P150 depending on the flavor. Customers can also enjoy their ice cream by topping them off with marshmallows, cookies and chocolates, among many others.

"Our best sellers are Vanilla yogurt ice cream bars with blueberries and marshmallows Loaf; Mango yogurt ice cream bars with strawberries and rice crispies," Mara says.

Know more about their products by visiting https://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=58181211 and http://buckets&berries.multiply.com.

Southern Sun

Southern Sun uses products from Bagobo, Zamboanga, a city in the south known for its beautiful cascade. Today, the brand consists of:

Communications Technology Management seniors Pedro Antonio, Mario Espiritu, Ramona Lu, Katrina Ong, and Dominic Rapsa are the founders of Southern Sun Particles spread.

"It was our love for good food that pushed us to initiate this business," post-senior Charlotte says. "Charlotte is a Filipino breakfast staple. We usually eat it with rice and egg [but] we realized that some eat it even with bread. So we thought... why not make it into a spread?"

Basic cheese spread costs P60 for the 100-gram pack and P80 for the 200-gram pack.

"Being an entrepreneur isn't easy at all. You will really face a lot of challenges," Charlotte says of her fellow CSB-ians. "You have to really want it, or else you'll end up doing things half-heartedly, which is bad for you and for the business."

Visit http://sucker-inspired.multiply.com and http://communicatesite.com.

BOOSTA!

The brainchild of Management Economics seniors Gabe Garcia, Matthew Ong and Rolly Enriquez, and Communications Technology Management senior Denis Ty and Legal Management senior Ian Co, BOOSTA! is a coffee snack bar consisting of chocolate-coated rice krispies.

"The product's name originated from the coffee beans infusion," partner Gabe explains.

"We developed our product [after] seeing a rapid increase in call center agencies," he continues. "We wanted to penetrate that market by catering them so that they need for the gruesome shift which's [a] boost of energy provided by coffee."

BOOSTA! coffee bars cost P25 each. One box containing ten pieces sells for P180.

As advice for young entrepreneurs like themselves, the group says, "Love your product. Be serious passion for it. Then everything else will fall into place."

Contact Gabe Garcia (09178464933), Denis Ty (09178431022) or Mallow Ong (09165911967) for orders.

BUCKETT and Berries (left) and Southern Sun Cheese Spread (right)

Goldfingers

Of cheating husbands and comebacking exes

DEAR JEWEL,

I caught my husband having an affair... he was stupid enough to leave his phone lying around with an open message from his other woman. I haven't told him yet but I know, as he/she thinks everything is normal, when deep inside I want to bury him alive. Do I tell him now or should I just bury him alive?

Rita

Dear Rita,

I get so many letters like yours—but let me reiterate, the answer is not the answer. Mental anguish is temporary, and is somehow taken through the soul. I lift of course. Okay, let's be serious now; let's say you confront him. Are you ready for the truth? If he tells you straight to your face that yes, he's having an affair, what do you plan to do next?

People hate being lied to, but have no idea what to do with the truth. Before you, breaking him, think about this. Two. Do you insist or do you forgive? Are you willing to work things out and are you even capable of forgiving the fact that he had slept with other people? If you decide to think, what about the children? Your conjugal properties? Where would you go?

I'm already here doing something, you just want him to confirm it. I'll send your questions wrong and you're just asking me for a creative way to tell him, with ease, for her food for his mouth when you drop the bomb.

I assume you know the kinds of answers.

Jewel

Dear Jewel,

My ex-boyfriend seems to have this habit in online...whenever I'm happy with a current boyfriend, he shows up and bugs me. I don't know what it is about him that I can't online, coincidence or me bitchingly was the mother of all online-scanner rides. Name the elevators never line ever, and I'm probably said it to him. I have to kick him out or say the permanently.

Isabael

Dear Sandy,

Here I am watching a series of "Sana Maulit Muli," starring Ago Medrich and Lee Robegas. Lea has to move to the US, for a while carrying on a long-distance relationship, but eventually they break up. She tries herself to deep for a bit, but eventually learns how to be on her own and how single life could be cruisin, especially when long-haired dudes take you out to dinner and help you make a take. Then she dresses up out of the blue and declares ending love stories after all these years, and they live and make up.

I don't get it. When exes show up in your door, you entertain them, you feed them, you make small talk, ask them how their parents/siblings/dogs are...you don't bring back whatever it is that made you cry endless nights staring them. No. I know everything is because of the global economic crisis, climate change and the rising of ocean levels, but ex-boyfriends, you don't go there.

If you have absolutely no doubt that he will any time to his words this time around, then take the chance again. Otherwise, don't look back.

Prayers him on yours,

Jewel

Unilever, through its number one food solutions brand Knorr, donates P4-Million to the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP), the world's largest humanitarian aid organization. The turnover of the money signals the official partnership of WFP and Knorr's Makulay ang Buhay ng Batang Pinoy supplementary feeding programme, where some 10,000 school children in Sultan Kudarat and North Cotabato will be given rice and corn soya-based meals daily. The contribution is expected to reach 426 schools in 12 municipalities in the said provinces. Shown receiving the check donation from Knorr Brand Manager Bajang Santos is WFP Country Director Stephen Anderson.

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

SATURDAY Special

And then there were–13

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR WEEKS NOW, "FABULOUS IDOL" FANS have been caught up in the high and low drama surrounding the show's rigorous process of whittling its 36 semi-finalists down to its 12 official finalists for 2009.

Getting down to the final 12 is a big deal for the semi-finalists, because it means weeks of sensational and sensational TV exposure, a performance showcase that has spelled stardom, **not just for each year's chosen Idol, but also, lately for some runners-up and also-rans, like Ouy Aiken and Jennifer Forbes.**

So, this year's 36 semi-finalists gave their performances everything they had, as they competed in three batches of 12, with each batch sending three survivors to the finals, with the remaining three to be chosen by the divas from eight "wild card" contestant hats.

Three groups

The three groups were dicots Grace, Adam Lambert, Allison Iraheta, Danny Dakey, Jorge Nuñez, Kris Allen, Jason Brands, Michael Sarver and Scott Alasbaster to the finals.

What about the wild-card flicts? Doing their damndest to make it to the final 12 were eight selected "results" who didn't get enough votes, but had especially impressed the idol jurors.

Our best bets: Since the start of this year's "IK," 17-year-old Jasmine Murray has been one of my favorites, so we were rooting for her. Anoop Desai also stood out to our view, so we plugged for him, as well. Our third choice? The lovely and talented Majida Joy Corkery.

But, the other five wild-card bets weren't almost to hand down the three slots in the final cut of fifteen, so we'll just have to give their performances their all—and, they did.

Special square-off

So, when the wild-card winners were announced at the end of the special square-off, we were ecstatic when the jurors picked Jasmine and Majida.

But, what about Anoop? Alas, he was one of the last two bets to avoid the jurors' decision, and when they finally spoke up, it was in Matt Bisnar's favor.

Poor Anoop! He was about to philosophically sling his debut off and walk away when it was ok, so dramatically revealed that, for the first time in the history of "American Idol," the jurors had decided to pick 13 finalists, and both Matt and Anoop were in!

We were beyond ecstatic. All of our faves had made it to the finals, and all was well with the world.

Of course, the road all the way to the 2009 "Idol" title will be long and rough, as all 13 finalists will have to give the idol's last leg, EIL percent of their talent, passion—and smarts.

By this, we mean that, aside from coming up with great and greatly felt performances, the 13 finalists will have to be extra savvy about making their song choices, looking good and coming across, not just as cool, exciting entertainers, but also as fascinating people whose multitude of interests will draw on, empathize with—and root for.

Having said that, last Wednesday's first 3- rails show turned out to be a bummer for Anoop, who was tapped by all four jurors for his bad song choice and "lassitude" performance. And last Thursday's elimination felled "star" Jasmine and Jorge Nuñez (Anoop) have. It was brief. Oh, that hurts.

But, that's the way the "Id" cookie crumbles—so, here's to the really smart contestants there who can survive all the way to the "Final Result" some 30 weeks from now!

And now, there are 12 . . .

"AI'S" FINALISTS: (Counterclockwise, from left) Kris Allen, Jasmine Murray, Adam Lambert, Lil Rounds, Scott Mackenzie, Anoop Desai, Kevin Drew, Allison Iraheta, Danny Gokey, Megan Corkery, Michael Sarver, Jorge Nuñez and Matt Giraud.

UPCAT REVIEW
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TOM'S WORLD

Oscar-ignored, but not forgotten

By Bella Cervantes

EVERYTIME THE OSCARS ARE handed out, we remember the distinguished few who were not (properly) honored for their years: Gloria Swanson, Greta Garbo, Claudette Colbert, Fred Astaire, Cary Grant, Alfred Hitchcock, Mickey Rooney, Rudy Vallee, Richard Burton, Irene Dunne, Barbara Stanwyck, Deborah Kerr, James Dean and Montgomery Clift.

Some of them have been given honorary Oscars as consolation. But, sorta is not, they're Hollywood icons whose names are synonymous with success immortality.

Unglamorous wife

For instance, who can forget the great disappointment Judy Garland must have felt when she lost the Oscar for her dazzling song-and-dance act in "A Star Is Born" to Grace Kelly who portrayed an unglamorous wife in "The Country Girl"? Some people thought the Philadelphia lassie's only achievement to that film was her being able to unglamorize herself.

Garbo also lost the Oscar to a mediocre Hollywood star, Norma Shearer, whose only claim to fame (and influence) was her husband, producer Irving Thalberg. Similarly, Swanson lost to Judy Holiday in "Born Yesterday," though Gloria's portrayal of an exhibitionist one to "Sunset Boulevard" is an Oscar-worthy as when she essayed it over 80 years ago. Her riveting performance even inspired a great Broadway musical, which included her memorable line, "I'm ready for my close-up, Mr. DeMille."

It seems not that politics plays an important role in the Oscars and, popularity makes a difference amongst the voters, too. Thus, when the Best golden girl, Grace Kelly, was pitted against the temperamental and difficult Garland, Kelly's "image" worked to her favor. Garland's last chance came in 1961 when she was nominated as Best Supporting Actress for "Judgment at Nuremberg," but she lost to Rita Moreno ("West Side Story").

The Oscars want to perpetuate the notion that being nominated is honor enough, but can anyone else but one's nominees? And, pray tell me which winners would rather be an also-ran? Certainly not Ernest Hemingway or Hattie Mcday.

GARLAND. Deserved golden statuette for her performance in "A Star Is Born."

Distinction

It doesn't matter if Marlon Brando refused to accept the Oscar for "Godfather," he still has the distinction of being one of the few Hollywood actors who won awarded two golden statuettes.

I don't think Rolleston Hepburn, himself strong or frigid Benjamin Franklin publicly stated that the Best Supporting actress statuette she received for "Orient Express" really belonged to "Adoration Godiva" in "Day for Night") would actually part with their multiple Oscars to give them to more deserving nominees.

Moreover, the Oscars should stop giving comedic performances against dramatic portrayals. This is tantamount to comparing apples with mangoes—or peaches with donuts!

Inspiring features make for Holy Week viewing alternatives

By Lila Berbrayan-Abreo

HERE'S A LIST OF UPLIFTING FILMS that provides an alternative to the "turbulent stories" aired on television during Holy Week:

"Philadelphia." A bright businessman lawyer (Tom Hanks) is fired by his law firm when his superiors discover that he is afflicted with AIDS. He sues and wins, with the help of his lawyer (Denzel Washington). A riveting courtroom drama, the film is a commentary on society's attitude toward gays at the height of the AIDS craze in the 1990s.

"Forrest Gump." A down-and-out honest man (Oliver Hanks' brilliant and stunning in his chapter his inability to comprehend the many situations he finds himself in. The movie takes viewers on a "tour" of contemporary US history—American involvement in the Vietnam War, Watergate, etc.

"Schindler's List." Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a German factory owner, employed some 1,100 Jews during the Nazi occupation in Poland during World War II, thus saving them from annihilation / death in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. His motivation turned from greed to compassion.

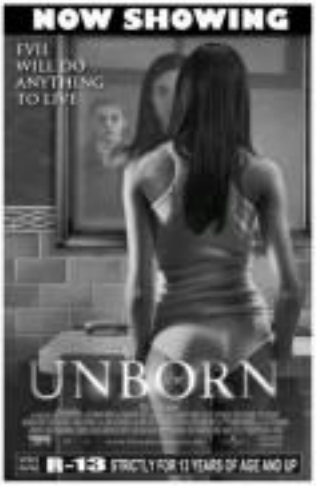
"Rudy." Tells the story of this Indian spiritual and political leader (played by Ben Kingsley) who launched a non-violent resistance movement against British rule and rule in India.

"Chariots of Fire" focuses on two athletes competing in the 1924 Olympics: One, a devout Scottish lay missionary who refuses to run on a Sunday, while the other competes for fame and glory.

"A Beautiful Mind." John Nash Jr. (Russell Crowe) is a schizophrenic mathematician who can solve problems that even brilliant scientific minds struggle with. With the help of his wife, Alicia (Jennifer Connelly), he overcomes the affliction, and this leads to self-discovery and peace.

(continued 11)

HANKS. Played a determined man in "Forrest Gump" and an AIDS-stricken gay lawyer in "Philadelphia."



Over-the-top performances on TV

By Nestor U. Torre

WITH SO MANY TELESERYES ON TV these days, their creative teams are under added pressure to come up with "USP" (unique viewing proposition) to make viewers snatch them, instead of other drama series on the tube.

Some try to achieve this by loading their casts with stars and starlets of all ages, while others come up with highly "dramatic" situations, conflicts and plot twists that excite the viewing public with their radically jagged thorpic highs and lows.

'Dramatic' scenes

Terrible is, these highly "dramatic" scenes require actors to maximize the use of their talents—and quite a number of them end up being TH (trying-hard), with a lot of thespic egg on their faces.

Recently, for instance, "Sinong Sisisihin" had a highly melodramatic confrontation scene between the characters played by young leads, Kim Chiu, Gerald Anderson and Julie Correa. Both young men pounded each other's face one over the other, and the protagonists became so passionate and frantic that everyone ended up screaming their emotions out.

We wondered if the young actors were merely obeying the eagerly sounding of their director—or, was he unable to control their overzealous histrionics—and simply shouted. Whatever, the result of their sins of commission or omission was collectively bad acting, pure and simple.

The worst offender was Correa, who ended up looking like a veritable ball of lard, unable to control himself, so he rode the shrill emotional crest of the extended sequence.

We don't fault Correa for his emotional outbursts, but for his inability to shape it to

RIVERA. Erratum is only the starting point for a performance, not its be-all and end-all.

clarify the thematic intention of the scene, instead of overwhelming and upstaging it. Surely, his director could have helped him more in this regard, but quite sadly, that assistance was not to be had.

Long-lost mother

More recently, on "Ang Babaeng Hinugot sa Aking Tadyang," another shrill and extended confrontation scene tasked the thespic resources of Marian Rivera and Jackielou Blanco (who played Bituka's "natod" and long-lost mother). Jackielou begged Marian to forgive her, but her daughter could not—and took many wobbly and emotional detours to "explain" why.

Jackielou is one of our best actresses, so it was distressing to see her struggle with the artificially melodramatic demands of the badly-written scene. In addition, the lyrics of her performance was marred by her bad interpretation of the song, which distracted and detracted from the full impact of her portrayal.

But, it was Marian who committed the greatest number of thespic sins. We understood how conflicted her character was, since her mother's disappearance had blighted her life. However, the actress was too overly emotional in her performance, piling one thespic shtick on top of another—tears, "sobbing" voice (hyperbaja?), wandering features, slowly toggling at the floor, etc. Apparently, the key never found of the actress instruction: "Less is more."

Proficiencies

As to Correa's case, we don't fault Marian for her emotional outburst, since it was clear that she was genuinely affected by her character's difficult predicament. But, she should realize that emotion is only the starting point for a performance, not its be-all and end-all.

Another thespic suggestion she should keep in mind is that, when a character's conflict is big and deep, the actor should use greater discretion and artistic judgement, to keep the scene from spilling over and becoming embarrassingly hammy.

Finally, we should point out that the "blame" for that loud and livid scene is shared by its overdocumentary and overlong scripting. (Intonations given by narrator, everyone.)

Fusion of Asian culinary delights

KATIPUNAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN Quezon City's University Belt. With Ateneo and Miriam based in the same area and UP not too far away, the place is surrounded by services that cater to the vicinity's huge student population.

Fifteen years ago, the success of any restaurant was based on good food at an affordable price. Using this criterion, there were hardly any cars sit-down restaurants that flourished in the area. Today, the place has totally changed.

More upscale

One establishment took a chance to open something a bit more upscale: Kamikuri, a restaurant that specializes in a fusion of Japanese and Asian cuisine and serves authentic and affordable food that includes best-selling Thai dishes.

[Then came] The Rans, owned by the husband and wife tandem of Ronnie and Marie Ricketts and partner Happy Roman, which offered great dishes. It closed its doors after a few years.)

WORD OF MOUTH

Sorely Deze

Not too long ago, a friend brought me to Izuy, a quiet eatery that served cuisine that would be a bit over the top for the middle class. The creativity of Izuy's young chef impressed me. He concocted French-inspired dishes with a influence of Japanese and Pinoy ingredients blended in. The place, a house transformed into a cozy diner, is located on Esteban Abada st., parallel to Katipunan ave.

Some of the dishes I tried: Salads with seared foie gras, pears vinegrette, honey-glazed grilled salmon with sweet citrus miso sauce and light wasabi, mashed potato, grilled asparagus and fresh-dried tomato. The seafood medley with coconut sauce was an interesting combination. All dishes were very creatively presented.

Descriptions

Reading the dishes' descriptions was enough for me to want to try everything. Samples: Mesquite oil smoked local halibut with saffron mussel emulsion and vanilla bean served with aglio e olio pasta, topped with micro-greens and fresh-cut grilled Chilean sea bass set on cassoulet of edamame, chick peas and Japanese corn.

Today, the restaurant has changed its name to Sizuy, which is the name of the place's young owner and chef. He's ready to suggest dishes to please your loved ones at Sizuy, located at No. 86 Esteban Abada st., Quezon City. Call 928-6459.

Happy eating!

Email sandydunn@inbox.ca

Center for Pop's 'discovery' training program

THIS SUMMER, DO YOU WANT your kids to learn solo singing performance, hip-hop/street dancing, show group singing, acting, speech and spirit, and social graces and etiquette in an all-in-one training program at half the regular price?

Here's a pioneering training program undertaken by the Center for Pop Music Philippines, in celebration of its 25th anniversary. The "Discovery Training Program" is an 18-day training package offered in all branches of Center for Pop and in selected Metro Manila schools this summer.

Approach

A brand new training approach conceived by Sarah Albarracin, founder of Center for Pop Music Philippines, the Discovery Training Program is designed to be fast paced, enjoyable and interactive.

Albarracin will personally train participants in speech and spirit at the Hall of Stars theater of the new Center for Pop building, Cyma Albarracin will handle lessons on social graces and etiquette.

Other workshops include Harmonic, the premium course on singing and stage performance; guitar, drums, bamboo and keyboard lessons; hip-hop and street dancing; acting; a four-in-one workshop on art, modeling, personality development and hosting. Call 721-0931.

Healing inspires advocacy

From page F4

the story, continued's complete name, mailing address, cell phone number and landline.

Primary mode of communication between organizers and participants is via email address.

Additional details can be obtained at the City and the financing Inmaculada Foundation, Suite 606, The Grogonian, 2178 Taft ave., Malate, Manila. Visit globoticoriae.blogspot.com, e-mail globoticoriae@gmail.com, or call 0921 398-6251.

ROBLES (center), with the foundation's volunteers.

Inspiring features make . . .

From page F1

the way for his winning the Nobel Prize.

"Life Is Beautiful," Guido (Roberto Benigni), a Jew, arrives in central Italy to set up a bookstore. There, he meets his wife (Nicoletta Braschi), who bears him a son. Taken as captives to a concentration camp, Guido keeps up his son's spirits by convincing him that being in the camp is just a game.

"The Secret Garden." Based on the children's classic by Frances Hodgson Burnett, this movie tells the story of orphaned Mary Lennox (Kate Maberly), an orphan who is sent to England to live with her uncle. She discovers an overgrown garden that she brings back to life. She then effects life-altering changes in the people around her. This film depicts how faulty belief systems can be overpowered by love.

NOW SHOWING

Popular superhero saga is rough around the edges

By Rio P. Ruiz

"Watchmen"

D. Zack Snyder

C. Jeffrey Dean Morgan, Malin Akerman, Patrick Wilson, Jackie Earle Haley, Matthew Goode and Billy Crudup

THE ENDS DON'T always justify the means in the world of the "Watchmen." If you take your superheroes as staunchly—and solidly—as do the fellow nerds of Alan Moore and David Hoffman (extremely popular '80s graphic novel; you'll hardly find fault in Zack Snyder's rousing big-screen interpretation.

The year is 1985. In these parts of the universe, Richard Nixon is still the titular head honcho of the United States, tension prevails in the Cold War between America and the Soviet Union threatens to explode into an all-out conflagration.

Almost lost in the political chaos and bureaucratic bog-down of the grim world are the superheroes, who are divided into half-a-dozen—and by their powers (human, human-plus, human-not-but-is-certainly-not-human) or vigilante justice.

An enormously unusual landscape is among those gifted superheroes is known to be of inhuman sexual desire—super-ship after one of their own, Edward Blake aka the Comedian (Academy Award Jeffrey Dean Morgan), is murdered. Haunted by the mysterious death of his transgender former colleague, Rorschach (Jackie Earle Haley) embarks on an investigation that soon uncovers plot to discredit and "right-minded" superheroes.

Enter Dan Dreiberg, Rorschach's one-time ally—John Wayne aka Ozymandias (Matthew Goode), Daniel Dreiberg aka Nite Owl II (Patrick Wilson), Laurie Juspeczyk aka Silk Spectre II (Malin Akerman) and the godlike Jon (computer-generated naked genius, Boston Manhattan) (BBC) Crudup)—are forced to regroup in John Steinbeck-Square one for outstanding puzzle: Who watches the Watchmen? But, are they ready for the answer?

Snyder's screen version of the comic book cult favorite has been viewing for less than a debacle at Rt. Last weekend, but it has also divided critics—for instance, Chicago Sun-Times' Roger Ebert and Time's Richard Corliss liked it, the reviewers from the Wall Street Journal and The Hollywood Reporter didn't (and that's putting it mildly)—which only shows how subjective, or divisive, moviegoing—and reviewing—can get.

If you notice Snyder's pleasure from seeing the forces of good smashing their evil nemesis, you'll have to patiently trudge through a number of gory scenes from beginning to end before you can welcome the good from the bad. Yes, they are as famously themed as you and me.

And, to forewarn: These superheroes are the kind who scoff at Clark Kent and Peter Parker's black-and-white sense of morality. If Bruce Wayne got his edge mostly from his angst years, the Watchmen get their's from the assorted perks their makers see as worth their objectives.

The film's thematic ambitions are a source of visceral and cerebral thrills, but the lengthy way Snyder tells his story defuses the excitement and tension the production's noted eye candy's initially generates.

In an attempt to be faithful to the original material, "Watchmen" feels itself drowning in lengthy exposition—which is a pity because judicious brevity would have made this dark, caught-around-the-edges comic-book gem a more cohesive and satisfying viewing experience.

MORGAN, AKERMAN, CRUDUP AND GOODE. Gifted, but flawed.

Healing inspires advocacy

STREET SMART

Mandy Navarro

MOURNING FINALLY came to an end one year after the tragic accident of Madam Gwendoline Bautista—or Gig. However, the process of healing had occurred long before then. The deep appreciation for her departed son has become a wellspring of inspired action.

Madam devoted her time soliciting books for the school library at the Immaculate Village but father founded. Little did she know that her desire to promote reading and literacy would soon turn into an advocacy. She transformed her son's legacy into the Gig and the Amazing Nanjingpala Wonderbus. (The boy loved the flower), which is now in the midst of a book storywriting contest.

Entries

The foundation is calling for entries from participants 17 years and older. Deadline for submission is on April 9 at 5 p.m. Entries must be written in English and intended for children, with 1,000 words or less in 10 x 10-page illustrated book. Stories should promote values and must resonate with children whose tastes are mostly around 10.

Submit entries to pjglendonawards@gmail.com. The main message should remain only the following items: Title of

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IN THIS ISSUE
Desperately searching for EWTN /G4

SATURDAY Special

By Rito P. Asilo

THE CURRENT DARLINGS OF TWEENBOP pop continue to rule Billboard's charts. Considine Trent Lenato's third studio album, "Don't Forget," debuted at No. 2, as did David Archuleta's self-titled first recording. Also impressive was Ashley Tisdale's well-received "Headstrong," which went to No. 5 on its first week. Jordin Sparks' eponymous, by-titled solo album may have only reached the Top 10, but it nevertheless generated a good number of hit singles.

The sensibilities of "High School Musical 3" and "Twilight" likewise zoomed to the top of the charts upon release, and those objectives from siblings, despite the disappointing box-office performance of their overhyped movie, Sonas Brothers: The 3D Concert Experience," remain a force to reckon with in the music charts, as proven by the third-place debut of their film's soundtrack this week.

Chronologically the best-than-stellar performances of "Ghost Bird," the recent release of "High School Musical3" PR Ans Ingleton, Vanessa Hudgens, & the only crossover album of note that has not measured up to its lofty expectations, take-wise—it debuted at No. 23 and went downhill from there.)

Fluffy sugar-coating

On top of this talented heap are two bright gals: Miley Cyrus and Taylor Swift, whose albums prove there's more to being successful duelings than network-manipulated hype and fluffy sugar-coating.

It has been four months since "Fearless," Swift's second studio album, debuted on top of the Billboard 200. This week, the 19-year-old country-music sensation's sophomore effort holds on to the No. 1 spot—the first album since Santana's "Supernatural" (1999) to top the pop-album chart for eleven nonconsecutive weeks.

Swift's collective documentaries a level of responsible maturity reminiscent to artistes long ago. She'll have you grooving along with her as she "dances in a parking lot" in the middle of a storm" with her "best dress on" ("Breathe"). But, she's also quick to acknowledge that adulthood requires her to go beyond dreaming, and reminds people in "take a deep breath/ look before you fall" ("Hilton").

She makes country music accessible by infusing irresistible pop-rock licks into the genre. The catchy hem covers lets up in "Hey Stephen," "Tell Me Why?" and "Forever & always." In "Breathe," thoughtful listening artikulates the frustrated thoughts of Taylor's cursing friend.

But, Taylor's sensory shines brightest in "The Best Day," a bittersweet tribute to her mom, and "Change," which addresses such youthful optimism, especially when she exclaims, "The best is yet to come!"

In "White Horse," heartbreak makes Swift realize that life is no fairy tale: "I'm not a princess/ this is no Hollywood./ It's too late for your white horse to catch me now/ It's too late for forgiveness..."

Manic groove

Miley Cyrus' "Breakout" also allows the teenage star to come out of her Disney-coated shell. She williams...and mesmerizes—the manic groove of the '80s to the fierce-sounding "Fly On The Wall," the AJ Gordon-inspired "Start Tom Again" and the catchy "Full Circle." Her April Lavigne-like swooshing of Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" is more aggressive than playful, without being prevalent.

Billy Ray's talented daughter vividly expresses different shades of youthful exuberance in "Goodbye" and the tempo-pushing indie-ish, "7 things."

But, the darkened, ambient sound of "Butterfly of the Ocean" and the maturity the teen star displays in "Simple Song" will convince you that Miley Cyrus is anything but simple and inexhaustive.

LOVATO, TISDALE AND HUDGENS. Princesses of the teen set.

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March 13-15, Central Plaza

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ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS NOW ACCEPTED IN ALL SM CINEMA BRANCHES

Getting to know 'Watch(wo)man' ...

ANTIHMAN: Her career is on the upswing.

Front page G4

who are quirky it was an opportunity to tap into my talent in comedy. Whether or not the film did well, at least it was something to send to casting directors and go, 'Look, she went out to see with Ben Stiller.'"

Striking brunette

Nine Tech from being a striking brunette in "Watchmen" to her natural blond hair, Malin acknowledged, "Blondes do have more fun, I'm very sorry to say it." Married to drummer Robert Jr. Rincon since 2005, she volunteered, "A career on another film added, "So how many of you combined have you dated in the past? I mean none of them, because I've been pretty much taken since I started in this career. It has been a benefit because I never had a temptation or opportunity to meet somebody. I feel extremely lucky to have a husband who's very supportive, neither jealous nor worried about the things that I do in my solo career." Malin runs Roberto-Alvarez joined his rock band, The Headwaves.

With her career on the upswing, Malin, whose other credits include "El Dorado" and "Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle," stressed that she will stay the course and not get caught up in all that celebrity hood. "There are certain things" that she does not do, like quipped, "Like, I don't go out much in nightclubs with short dresses and no underwear." Huh?, whom we interviewed along with Malin, jokingly chimed in, "Like."

High visibility

The high visibility that "Watchmen" is giving her has led to several offers. Malin has accepted to appear opposite Ryan Phillippe in "The Bang Bang Club," a drama set in apartheid-era South Africa. She will be seen next in Sandra Bullock's "The Proposal" and Vince Vaughn's "Couples Retreat."

Any chance of "Watchmen 2"? Malin answered, "How do you like "Watchmen"? It's one of the best if Alan Moore isn't writing the prequel or the sequel, where do you get the material? But, nine will tell. We'll see."

Email rmagsalin@yahoo.com.ph, and read the blog "The Popular Report," at http://blogs.inquirer.net/popularreport

Desperately searching for EWTN

From page G4

the religious channel to be able to continue serving the spiritual needs of Filipinos.

Despite the fact that its foundress, Mother Angelica, is no longer hosting new telecasts, EWTN fields other insightful issues and programs that enhance viewers' relationship with God and others.

A predominantly Catholic country like the Philippines can't be deprived of such a key spiritual help. Here on TV... which is a boon not just to Catholics, but also to other viewers who want to make God a bigger and more significant part of their lives.

Focus on Letter Day Story

From page G4

sent young image models, encouraging kids aged 3 to 7 years old to develop their singing, dancing and acting talents. It has also paved the way for its winners to become young celebrities and popular performers. The 2008 search was launched last March 8, with a series of screenings at different Ever Gotesco malls leading up to the grand finals on May 31. Interested? Call Creed Noise Pro at 706-4611 or 738-0281.

Sun Cellular's new combos

Welcome the new Sun Cellular P50 Sun Call & Text Combo 20, packed with 40 minutes of Sun-to-Sun calls, 120 Sun-to-Sun unlimited GB texts to other networks for three days—enabling you to stay in touch with your friends and family for just P50 a day!

In addition, subscribers to the popular P26 Call & Text Combo 20 can now stay connected for two days, to maximize your use of its power-packed features—80 Sun-to-Sun texts, 20 minutes of Sun-to-Sun calls and 20 text allowances to other networks. Call 395-0000, or log on to www.sunlife.com.ph.

Disney auditions

Ryan Cayabyab announces that an international casting team from Hong Kong Disneyland will come to Manila to audition students on March 19 and 20 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at The Music School of Ryan Cayabyab at Robinsons Galleria.

The casting team is looking for exceptional musicians who can play the piano, trumpet, trombone, tuba, saxophone, clarinet, flute and percussions. They will also be special auditions for pop-a cappella trio and quartets with fun and contemporary repertoire. Call 637-0000, or e-mail auditionsmusic@gmail.com.

Movies on TV

On HBO today at 7 a.m., "Freedom Writers." Tomorrow at 8 p.m., "Sweeney Todd." March 16 at 10:15 a.m., "Mary My Heart at Wounded Knee." March 17 at 2:45 p.m., "Finding Forrester." March 18 at 11 a.m., "Field of Dreams." March 19 at 9 p.m., "Hollow Man." March 20 at 3 p.m., "An Inconvenient Truth."

On Cinemax today at 1 p.m., "Street Smart." Tomorrow at 3 p.m., "Keeper's Shell." March 16 at 7 a.m., "The Bridges at Toko-Ri." March 17 at 7 a.m., "The Son's Story." March 18 at 4:30 p.m., "The Green Mile On Earth." March 19 at 11 a.m., "Five Times at Edgemont High." March 20 at 10:30 a.m., "The Day of the Locust."

EVER Kiddie Stars members have a great time.

Isetann 3-Day Sale Draws in Huge Crowd

Last February 13-15, Isetann Department Store and Supermarket once again provided their patrons not just great discounts and discounts but also cool prizes and entertainment. This time, a promo started late in 2007 when the Strategic and Creative Marketing group of Isetann made a thorough research and patiently listened to the minds of their loyal shoppers. Most aside from discounts said no exciting raffle prizes, creative gimmicks and value for money are among the top concerns.

A P20 minimum for every P500 spent in Isetann shoppers for both supermarket and department stores, turned out to be what they really wanted — an extra "mga pera-pera" with what they spent. Then, the 3-Day Sale plus Rebate card lottery was launched in February 2008 and continued in February 2009. Aside from the rebate extra saving, fun filled activities per season were added aside from dazzling guests.

The recent celebrity who graced the event was non other than Concepcion who drew young crowd from the playground that is the mall. Aside from Isetann partnership, Sam Concepcion supported Isetann on giving total shopping experience to all its patrons. Isetann is always committed in giving happiness to its shoppers by making their shopping experience more positive.

To find their nearest Isetann branch can pit to get updated of their upcoming event, sale, rebate and great offerings.

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2 HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU
3 TAKEN
4 THE UNBORN
5 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
6 WATCHMEN
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9 STREETFIGHTER THE LEGEND OF CHUN-LI
10 THE INTERNATIONAL

ERMITA

1 THE UNBORN
2 TAKEN
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METRO EAST

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NOVALICHES

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 THE UNBORN
3 TAKEN
4 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN

PIONEER

1 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
2 TAKEN
3 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
4 THE UNBORN

STA. ROSA

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 TAKEN
4 PUSH

LIPA

1 ORAS TORING / PUSH
2 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
3 THE INTERNATIONAL
4 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN

DASMARINAS

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 WATCHMEN
4 TAKEN

IMUS

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 TAKEN
4 WATCHMEN

ANGELES

1 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
2 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 TAKEN
4 PUSH

STARMILLS

1 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
2 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
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5 PUSH
6 HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU

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2 THE ABANDONED
3 VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA
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6 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN

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NOW SHOWING

Based on the DC Comics book created/written by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons.

Quick camera position check of Rorschach's face and will not fail to smooth...

watch them at MOVIEWORLD

For a chance to win a limited edition WATCHMEN shirt

AKERMAN: "It contains bits of my past into characters"

Getting to know 'Watch(wo)man' Malin Akerman

LOS ANGELES—"LET'S JUST say that if clothes make the man, heels make the woman, and so does latex," Malin Akerman instantly told us about her sexy costume as Silk Spectre II in "Watchmen."

Malin, who has been quoted as saying that she outweighs latex costume made for small like a modern, added, "It's quite an interesting costume. It's beautiful, it's sexy and screaming. This is the first time I play a superhero. Wearing on a costume helps you get into character and that helps mend for all the fighting. I have to say, though, that latex is definitely not the most comfortable material. Being covered is not comfortable, too, but it also got you into that mode."

The actress, who sang lead vocals for the band, The Pendulums, quipped: "There were moments where we paused, looked at each other, and went, 'What are we doing?' By this time, the whole world knows that 'we' means the main cast of "Watchmen": Jackie Earle Haley, Patrick Wilson, Jackie Haley, Matthew Goode, Billy Crudup and director Zack Snyder. Carla Gugino plays the original Silk Spectre.

Main concern

Of the graphic novel that the movie was adapted from, Malin said, "When I heard there was a movie material, I went out and got the book. It's a novel that's timeless. Anybody who reads this novel becomes an instant fan. I've asked my family and friends to read it, and they always have the same reaction: 'Wow, this is amazing! It's so good, but how is this book going to be made into a film?' That was always the main concern initially. But, we already read the script, so we had no fear. The pressure kept easing off when we met Zack [Snyder, director] who shared his vision for the film with us."

Did the Marilyn and Billy ripped on well, as about how the organized dancers and get-togethers during the long shoot in Vancouver, Malin laughed and commented: "It might be that feminine touch. It just organically became that way. I'm a very social person. I love hanging out. Since we were away from home for a long time, it was nice to have that company and get to know one another. I always wanted girl of the boys and were, 'Come on, we're going to eat some good food, not just burgers and fries!'

"Carla Gugino was the other one. She started it all, really. She's one biggest foodie. She knows every single restaurant. We'd go everywhere, and she would settle everything for us. Once, she was out of town, she kept hooked up me and said, 'Haven't you gone on enough for us?' I was like, 'I guess.' I hope I lived up to Carla's ordering skills."

Born in Sweden but raised in Canada, Malin credits her dual heritage. She explained with relish, "Everytime I'm in Canada, I feel more Swedish, and everytime I'm in Sweden, I feel more Canadian. I belong to both places, and I love them both equally. It's funny to see the Swedes dress me in their pride and then the Canadians going, 'Our Canadian girl.' It's like it all."

Looking and listening to the friendly, smiling actress talk, it was hard to imagine her as a hateful kid. "I started my life as a very shy person," she claimed. "Believe it or not, I didn't speak much until I was 10. I can't say that I did anything proactive during that time other than be around."

But, now, like her character in "Watchmen," she's very proactive. "I'm the type of person who can't help but speak up if anyone is being treated unfairly," she stated. "That's one of my biggest pet peeves...when someone is being unfair to you or someone is being picked on, I hate it. It actually boils my blood." Breaking into laughter, she added: "I have to work on the Silk Specter part in me, because I do want to start throwing punches. Whatever gets in me is where I hail over."

Very active

But, Malin is more likely to help save the world than hail-out. "There are many organizations that you can help out with," she stressed. "I'm very active with those things. I do my part in whatever way I can."

Malin, whose first big break was as Ben Stiller's wife in "The Heartbreak Kid," described her rise to stardom as "happening by instantaneous. The Heartbreak Kid' got my foot in the door; the first big film where I had a big role. It opened doors to casting directors like that first. I would have never been considered for certain films. And, somehow, I got myself into this film. Hopefully, this will be another door that opens up to films that aren't just comedies."

Asked if she was disappointed that "The Heartbreak Kid" flopped, Malin replied, "No, because, I loved my role. Unfortunately, the film wasn't seen by many people. But, I'm still proud of that movie. It was a huge deal to be seen onscreen with Ben Stiller. He's a fabulous comedian. On paper, the role was something you don't see women do often. We don't get to be the crazy, nutty ones, it's usually the guys

GETTING G2

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rubrew F. Reyvales

Desperately searching for EWTN

By Nestor U. Torre

MOTHER ANGELICA: The network she founded holds insightful hosts and programs that enhance viewers' relationship with God and others

I WATCH THE RELIGIOUS channel, EWTN (Eternal Word Catholic Network), on a regular basis for its daily lineup of faith-bolstering programs and inspiration. One day last week, however, when I tuned in to EWTN on its usual slot on Sky-Cable 61, I saw that it had been replaced—by a golf channel (of all things).

I decided to complain, so I asked a well-connected friend in cable SkyCable executive he knew. I told my friend to inform the executive that many people have watched EWTN, so it shouldn't be taken off the air. If no reason existed was needed for the cable company's needs, there were so many other less serviceable stations that could be replaced without anybody crying foul.

Message

My good friend rolled back to say he had communicated the message to his contact, but the executive was no longer with SkyCable. He said he was directed to the cable company's customer relations phone person, who told him that EWTN would still be availed of by SkyCable subscribers without paying an extra fee, if they could reach it on Channel 161.

Despite my being fervently unfriendly to the company, my blood was such a good instructor that I was able to parade the right moral buttons on the remote control—and, voila, exodus and channel found, there were the familiar images of EWTN on Channel 161! It was now a bit of an extra chore to access the religious channel, but at least it was still available to our household. Problem solved!

Not long after, however, EWTN abruptly returned to Channel 61. What happened? It could be that, aside from my complaint, the cable company had been given other regular viewers of the religious channel, and had decided to move it back to its original slot, to placate and sensitive dolorous to some of its subscribers' wishes.

If this is indeed what happened, SkyCable should be commended for listening to its subscribers, unlike some other media companies that regard public opinion as so much hot air and irrelevant noise, signifying little.

Rumor

Having said all that, however, I must share the info I recently received, which alleges that "EWTN was removed because many groups reportedly paid to expose it with a burning candle."

As of this writing (March 12), EWTN is still on SkyCable Channel 61, so that dastardly plot could be just a rumor, or has done far failed to prosper. But unusual, however, that regular EWTN viewers will continue to vigilantly fight for

DESPERATELY G2

THE VICTORIOUS BAND, after winning Nescafé Soundblast 2008

Focus on Letter Day Story

BEFORE WINNING THE Nescafé Soundblast 2008 college band competition, Letter Day Story had to overcome their families' objections. Happily, however, after the new band's victory, their parents became their biggest fans.

Actual- ly, Letter Day Story formed even before the Nescafé Soundblast finals. As vocalist Aldrick Ta shares, "Nescafé Soundblast gave my folks the first chance to see us play, and they became completely supportive of the band."

The headstrong call their music as "pop punk," but they sometimes risk it up with other genres, playing their own songs as reggae, blues or even jazz.

Aldrick further shares, "Each song we write is a window to one of our experiences"—the band's name: "Letter" literally means solar, "day" speaks of their everyday experiences, and "story" suggests that each band-mate has his own story to tell.

The bandmates joined Nescafé Soundblast for valuable exposure—and, they got even more than they had wished for. Mentoring from some of the country's biggest musical names—and victory! Letter Day Story will have even more remarkable musical stories to tell them here on in.

'Baler' on video

"Baler," the most awarded movie in last year's Metro Manila Film Festival, will be available on video beginning March 18. Anne Curtis and Jericho Rosales star as a newlywed lovers in 1898, as Spanish and Filipino military forces engage in the battle of Baler, surviving and re-

"BALER." Out in video starting March 18.

ZELLWEGER. Plays an ambitious executive in new cast.

KIDMAN. Visits "Oprah" on March 29.

HERGAN. Portrays the mythical serpent of Camalon

MONTAGE

duration known as the Siege of Baler. The DVD's special added features include a history of Baler, deleted scenes and character sketches.

'New in Town'

In her latest starrer, Rated 2nd Sexiest Star, Larry Hill, an ambitious executive who is offered a temporary assignment to restructure a manufacturing plant in the middle of nowhere. She jumps at the opportunity knowing that a big promotion will follow. However, she gets more than she bargained for. She finds genuine meaning in her life and, more unexpectedly, the man of her dreams. (Harry Goaziou Jr.)

'Merlin' on Hallmark

The Hallmark Channel proud- ly presents new hit series, "Merlin," which releases every Monday at 9 p.m. In the magical and inspiring 13-part drama series, the focus is not on the usual ancient wizard of Camelot, but on the early days of Merlin and Arthur, before they discovered their destinies were separately fulfilled. Colin Morgan plays the title role.

Oprah's special guests

Tuesday at 8 p.m. on Hallmark, Oprah Winfrey's hot talk show, "Oprah" special guests: March 15, Queen Latifah, Dakota Fanning and the other stars of "The Secret Lives of Bees." March 22, Will Smith and Tina Fey. March 29, Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman on his Down Under.

'Ever Kiddie Story'

"Ever Kiddie Story" is Ever Gonzaga Mills' search for its

ROCKS G2

New Voice announces 2009 summer theater workshop

ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S most progressive, innovative and memorable theater companies, the New Voice Company, headed by artistic director Monique Wilson, is proud to announce its 2009 Summer Theater Workshop. The course being offered this year is Acting for Teens and Adults.

Course

This course is aimed at students (13 years and older) who wish to explore the exciting world of acting and theater. Students will have classes in acting and improvisation using the Stanislavski and Meyerhold approach. This includes some memory, physical and psychological actions, animal work, relationship exercises and having fun is bound a character.

Work will also include theater games by Viola Spolin which encourages team building part of a team, confidence-building, concentration, and developing creativity and imagination.

Workshop classes run from April 1 to May 31. Classes for teens will be on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. while classes for adults will be on Tuesdays and Fridays from 7 to 9:30 p.m. All classes will be held at the New Voice Company Actor Studio: 8020 Tangelo st., San Antonio Village, Makati City.

The final showcase will be held at the RCBC Theater on May 31. Main workshop teacher and director is MAC associate artistic director Rico Salita, who will be handling the adult class-

WILSON. MAC's artistic director

es. Missy Hermosura will handle the teens class. Monique Wilson will be supervising and coordinating the first few weeks of classes. Call 896-8695, 898-3497 or 899-0638, visit www.newvoicecompany.com, or e-mail nvc@pldtdsl.net.

FORUM

Music lovers choose songs that set the romantic mood

By Nestor Torre

"MUSIC HATH CHARMS TO soothe the savage beast," and when you're on a date, a little music can go a long way. We asked a few lucky lovers to tell us what music they'd most play- ing in the background if they were out on a date with their special someone. Their "loving" choices:

"I would play the love songs of Rakgasa ("The Real Thing, Nightshirt," "The Hurt"). Jan- bicola ("Biggest Hurt of Me," "I Just Can't Get Go"), or Ge Wan ("Run and Mean," "What You Mean to Me"). They have sexy ballads to set the mood." —MJ Pelayo, 26, industrial engineer

Big-band music

"I'd like to listen to Michael Bublé's big-band romantic- ism. I like big-band music, and Bublé's voice is really romantic and smooth—no belting that hurts your ears, ears, and he

Bublé. Smooth voice.

can definitely set the mood." —Andrea Tampoot, 27, communications coordinator

"I'd play the albums of Kenny G or John Concepcion, both of whom play the tenor sax. I find the music they make very sensuous and romantic, and it really appeals to the ladies." —Bernie Mondoñedo, 30, government employee

"Savage Garden's self-titled album, especially the song, 'Truly Madly Deeply,' because I'm choosy when I'm in love!" —Richmond Ann, 30, marketing analyst

"I like Sitti's album. She's a Filipina who does really excellent bossa nova. I find her soothing voice very relaxing, and her songs are less percussive." —Jonathon Magsayo, 26, web designer

No words needed

"Any album by Michael Bracker would be an appropriate choice. He plays the alto saxophone, which has a deep tone and very sexy sound. Jazz music can be romantic, no words needed. The instruments and music are enough." —Jeordie Alstrom, 37, nurse

"Tone Undercut," Rico Blanco's album, mainly because it's what I'm listening to right now. My girlfriend and I like it. I'd also play Plato Where To "123A," which is my song for her." —Joe Cruz, 30, web designer